A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

GRANNAN

VOL. III

STUDIO ADDICTUS
HOLY CROSS PROVINCE

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

BY

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IN FOUR VOLUMES

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HOLY CROSS PROVINCE

VOLUME III

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PREFACE

The subject of inspiration, considering its nature, might properly be, and sometimes is, discussed in dogmatic theology. Time was, and not so long ago, when the dogmatist left it to the scripturist to take care of inspiration, and the scripturist, with equal magnanimity, left it to the dogmatist with the result that inspiration was sometimes left to take care of itself. Now it is otherwise. However, all other things being equal, this topic seems to belong more properly to the scripturist.

Accordingly, in this volume, the author first explains the entire subject of inspiration in a brief outline, which students can easily fill out for themselves by subsequent reading or study. He then discusses much more fully the inerrancy of Scripture in its relation to the scientific, the historical, and the quotational parts of the Bible, and shows that there is no reason to modify in any way the traditional teaching of the Church, as held from the beginning down to our own time.

In the second part of this volume we discuss the question to which and to how many books inspiration extends.

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PART I

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

VOLUME III

PART I

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Introduction

This branch of Biblical Introduction is so important and so difficult that a rapid survey of the principal conclusions reached by many of our best writers will be acceptable to the general reader. But especially theologians, whether still following a course in the seminary, or studying privately amid the distractions of the missions, will find this topic most interesting on account of the peculiar nature and the exceptional character of the Sacred Books.

In the Bible we have a book that has solved more of the problems of life, awakened more lofty sentiments, aroused more genuine religious enthusiasm, prompted to more heroic deeds, inspired more useful lives, and helped to make men more gentle and more manly, more truthful and more honest, both as citizens and as Christians, than any other book ever written. In fact, it has exercised such a stupendous influence on the civilized world that we may rightly infer that there

must be some strange power lodged within its pages; and the question naturally suggests itself: What is the secret of this power? How is this singular, this widespread, this permanent influence of the Bible to be accounted for? What is it that gives to Holy Writ so firm a hold on the best and the noblest of our race?

It is because Sacred Scripture is a divine book.

In all ages of the Christian Church the Bible has been considered *divine*. But in what sense or, rather, in how many senses is Scripture divine, and wherein consists its divinity? To avoid confusion in the use of the term, it is important, at the very start, to make a clear distinction between two senses of the word, when applied to the Bible, for Sacred Scripture is divine in two ways:

1. By reason of its *Author,* and
2. By reason of its *contents.*

1. Sacred Scripture is divine on account of its *Author;* that is, on account of its origin, on account of the divine source from which it proceeded, on account of the divine Cause by which it was produced, on account of the divine Person by whom it was composed — God the Holy Ghost.

In this case, whatever may be the nature of its contents, whether divine or human, the book itself is divine, because it is the result of the supernatural operation of God exercised on the human writer, both urging him to write and directing him, while writ-

ing, in such a way that *God* becomes the *principal Author* of the book so written, and the man, so directed, becomes the secondary or *instrumental author.* Thus, the book is divine, because produced by God, though through the instrumentality of man.

2. Again, Holy Scripture is divine on account of its *contents;* that is, on account of the topics handled in it, on account of the subject-matter discussed in it, on account of the truths taught in it, on account of the revelations, mysteries, miracles and prophesies contained in it,— all of which treat of God and "the deep things of God."

Understood in this sense, as indicating the nature or character of its contents, divinity is not peculiar to Scripture alone, but is common to many other books, such as the *Divina Commedia* of Dante and the works of many theological writers in all ages.

Thus the divinity of Scripture includes two ideas: (1) *Divine origin, or composition, or authorship;* and (2) *Divine topics, truths, themes, subject-matter, contents.*

In other words, there are in Sacred Scripture two distinct divine elements, the one called *inspiration* and the other called *revelation.* We are here concerned only with the first element, and reserve the second for another occasion.

Now, in order that the student may have, in advance, some general notion of inspiration, the subject-matter under discussion, we may take for granted the accuracy of the following

Definition of Inspiration

Biblical inspiration is a supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the sacred writer, urging him to write, enlightening him while writing, and directing and assisting him to write just what God wishes, and no more.

A brief analysis of this definition will show that the subject is both difficult and important. *Difficult,* as we shall see later, because it touches on the mysterious operation of the Spirit of God on the spirit of man; and *important,* because Sacred Scripture is one of the two channels through which many truths of revealed religion are transmitted to us.

The theme is delicate and complicated. So, in order to treat it methodically, we shall make the following divisions:

§ 1 — The Criteria of Inspiration;
§ 2 — The Proofs of Inspiration;
§ 3 — The Nature of Inspiration;
§ 4 — The Extent of Inspiration;
§ 5 — The Effects of Inspiration;
§ 6 — False Theories of Inspiration.

§ 1. The Criteria of Inspiration

To prove the inspiration of Sacred Scripture, it is necessary, at the very beginning, to select the proper kind of arguments; for many arguments cited for the purpose are entirely useless and prove nothing. The arguments or, rather, the classes of arguments used

to prove the inspiration of Sacred Scripture, are usually called *criteria.* It is important to have a definite notion of the meaning of this word.

A *criterion,* in general, may be defined as some well-established truth, some recognized principle, some fixed rule, test, or standard by which to determine the correctness of a conclusion or judgment; or, it is some general principle according to which we distinguish truth from falsehood.

According to this definition, the criterion of inspiration is the test, rule, or principle, by which we distinguish inspired from non-inspired books.

Now, any criterion, to serve such a purpose, should have three requisites:

(1) It should be *infallibly true* and, of course, invariable.

(2) It should be *universally applicable* to all the books without exception.

(3) It should be *universally adapted* to the capacity, or within the reach, of all men; for all have a right to the knowledge which all need for salvation.

Such a criterion is needed in this case, because there is question of the inspiration of Scripture, which is a dogma of the Christian Church and a channel of many other dogmas; also because it must be a criterion on which we can make an act, not merely of *human,* but also of *divine* faith.

Many criteria of inspiration have been proposed in the last three or four hundred years, of which all but one have proved to be either intrinsically false and absurd or, for some other reason, are insufficient for

the purpose for which they were proposed. We arrange them under four heads, according as they concern either:

1. The *Book* itself, or
2. The *Reader* of the Book, or
3. The *Writer* of the Book, or
4. The *Author* of the Book.

1. The Book Itself

The first criterion, which is sometimes called the *Anglican,* is based on the *books,* that is, on the intrinsic excellence both (1) of the *matter,* and (2) of the *form* of the books. It is gratuitously taken for granted that these may be such as to prove the inspiration of the Sacred Books.

1. The *matter* contained in a Sacred Book may be of two kinds, (a) historical, and (b) doctrinal.

(a) The *historical* part of a Sacred Book consists of accounts of miracles and prophecies, which are supernatural works of God, the purpose of which is to establish or to confirm the truth of revealed religion.

(b) The *doctrinal* part consists of the sublimity, the holiness, the perfection and the harmony of the doctrines of Sacred Scripture, both in their *speculative* and in their *practical* features.

2. The *literary form,* the language of the books, if remarkable for its vigor and cogency, for its power to appeal to conscience and for its singular beauty and simplicity, it is claimed, will also prove that such books are inspired. In these respects, it is said, the Sacred

Scriptures are so superior to all other books that the only way to explain this superiority is to suppose that God is their Author.

However, this criterion, in all its parts, is based on an *equivocation.* It mixes up and identifies things so thoroughly different as *Inspiration* and *Revelation.* Many topics treated in the Bible are divine, yes; but is the Author of the books also divine? Now, it is precisely this divine authorship that is needed to make books inspired, and without it they can not be inspired.

The question, then, is not: What do the books contain? but, *Who* wrote them? Was it God and man together, or was it man alone?

This Anglican criterion would show, at most, that some books or, rather, *some parts* of some books, are divine in their *contents;* but it does not, and it cannot, show that any of the books are divine in their *origin,* or that they are divinely inspired, or "have God for their author."

To show the uselessness of this criterion, it is enough to reflect that the works of many ecclesiastical writers, such as St. Chrysostom, St. Bernard, Thomas à Kempis, Bossuet and others, contain just as sublime topics, and are written in just as elegant a style, as many of the books of the Bible; and yet no one ever considered them inspired. Hence this criterion proves too much.

There are also in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, many books which contain no such topics as are mentioned in this criterion, and are written in

an inferior style, such as Proverbs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes. The Book of Esther, as found in the Protestant Bible, does not mention any religious topic, not even the name of God or any of His attributes. Also the Book of Numbers is as dry in style and as uninteresting in contents as the multiplication table, yet no one ever denied the inspired character of any of these books. This criterion, then, proves too little.

There are also in the Bible books which contain such topics as mentioned above, but only here and there, in certain places. Shall we say that such books are inspired, but only in spots? Shall we admit the theory of partial inspiration?

The question of *style* is one on which men, even the most competent to judge, have differed at all times. Some of the best and most elegantly written works have been rejected by well-known publishers. Literary taste is largely subjective and ever varying, according to the psychological disposition of the reader at the moment.

This criterion, therefore, proves too much and it proves too little; hence it proves nothing, and is no criterion at all.

2. The Reader of the Book

That Holy Scripture produces in the mind of the reader sentiments of devotion, faith, hope, and love for God and man, etc., is often urged as proof of the inspiration of the Sacred Books.

This criterion, sometimes called the *Lutheran,* was followed by many of the early Reformers. Luther

said he could tell inspired from non-inspired books, just as he could tell good from bad food, by the relish (*"gustu et sapore"*) which he experienced in using them.

No doubt, deep religious sentiments are often aroused in the soul of the well-disposed reader whilst meditating on the Sacred Books. We admit that on men of all times and all conditions Scripture has exercised an elevating and ennobling influence; but that fact cannot be made a sure and conclusive test of the inspiration of the books thus read. Such a criterion is purely subjective, and exposes the reader to all sorts of illusions, of which history furnishes innumerable instances.

The impression received from reading Sacred Scripture will vary much from person to person and, even with the same person, it will vary at different times according to the psychological condition in which the reader happens to be at the moment. So, this criterion is not universal as to *readers*.

Besides, there are parts of books, and even entire books in Sacred Scripture, the reading of which excites no such sentiments as described, and yet they have always been considered inspired, even by Lutherans. So, this criterion is not universal as to *books*.

On the other hand there are books, the reading of which arouses the deepest religious emotions, and yet no one, not even Lutherans, have ever considered them inspired; for instance, The Imitation of Christ.

Therefore, this criterion proves too much, it proves too little, it proves nothing. It is no criterion at all.

Michaelis says: "An interior sensation of the effects of the Holy Spirit and a conviction of the usefulness of these writings to sanctify and purify the heart, are very unreliable proofs. As to this interior sensation, I frankly admit that I have never felt it; and those who experience it are no more worthy of envy, nor nearer the truth, since even Mahometans feel it in reading the Koran. Pious sentiments can easily be excited by reading the writings of philosophers, by works purely human in origin, and even by works founded upon error." (Michaelis, *Intr.*, III, 3.)

3. The Writer of the Book

A. Convinced of the insufficiency of all the foregoing criteria of inspiration, J. D. Michaelis was the first to maintain that the *Apostolic origin* of a book is proof conclusive that the book is divinely inspired. This criterion may be thus expressed: Any book written by an Apostle *is* inspired, and any book *not* written by an Apostle is *not* inspired.

The idea is that, not only inspiration "*ad loquendum,*" but also inspiration "*ad scribendum,*" was an integral part of the Apostolic office, as actually conferred by Christ on his Apostles.

Therefore, from the mere fact that a book was written by an Apostle in the performance of his duty, it follows, they say, that the book is necessarily inspired.

As explained by Michaelis, this criterion is both *positive* and *negative*. Any book written by an Apostle is inspired; that is the positive or affirmative part of

the proposition. Any book not written by an Apostle is not inspired; this is the negative part. Accordingly, to be consistent, Michaelis boldly denied the inspiration of the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and of the Acts of the Apostles, because they were not written by Apostles.

Some very able and very orthodox Catholic writers, such as Lamy, Günter, Ubaldi, Reithmaier, Schanz, and others, adopt this criterion in its positive, but reject it in its negative form. They admit that inspiration was not an essential part of the Apostolic office, considered in the abstract; but maintain that, in the concrete form in which Christ conferred this office, inspiration, along with certain other special gifts, was included. Their arguments, though ingenious, when fully explained, seem not to have convinced the majority of Catholic writers. One reason assigned for rejecting this criterion is the following:

The Apostolic office implies doctrinal infallibility; that is, immunity from error, for producing which a purely negative divine assistance is sufficient; whereas inspiration supposes a positive divine assistance in the act of composing. Thus an author may be infallible in writing on matters pertaining to faith and morals, and yet not be inspired. For instance, the dogmatic definitions of popes and ecumenical councils are infallible, but no one ever says they are inspired.

Another instance in point: *The Apostles' Creed,* even in the earliest times, was believed to have been composed by the Apostles,— by all twelve Apostles; and yet it was never considered inspired. Evidently,

then, inspiration is not necessarily included among the privileges of the apostolate.

However, it may be well to remark that the Apostolic office is a valid negative criterion in this sense, that any book not written till after the death of the last Apostle, can never be considered inspired, and, even if it were inspired, it could never become a canonical book. There would be no proper divine and Apostolic tradition testifying to its inspiration.

B. The *testimony of the writer,* asserting that he was inspired, is sometimes urged as sufficient proof of inspiration. But this criterion also is insufficient. The writer may have been inspired, but never knew it; or he may have known it, but never mentioned it; or he may have mentioned it, but could not prove it. Most of the Sacred Writers never say a word about their own inspiration. In all such cases this criterion cannot be applied, and cannot prove the inspiration of one single book of the New Testament.

Supernatural, psychological facts, which take place in the innermost recesses of the soul, are generally unknown even to the person most concerned and still more unknown to others. So, by original, personal knowledge, it is only the Holy Ghost who knows whether He inspired a writer or not. Accordingly, if a writer ever comes to know that he was inspired, he must have learned this fact by divine revelation, whether immediate or mediate; and, should he wish to communicate that knowledge to others, his testimony, precisely as his, could produce, at most, mere human, but not divine, faith; unless, of course, it were

confirmed by miracles or by a divine mission to teach. In either of these cases the proof of inspiration would depend, not on the mere word of the writer, but on the testimony of God by which it is confirmed. Therefore this criterion also is lacking in all the requirements of a valid criterion.

4. The Author of the Book

Some Protestants, especially old-fashioned Calvinists and Pietists generally, have maintained that God, by a direct, interior illumination of the mind, by a private revelation, by a personal, immediate enlightenment of the intellect, reveals to each Christian which books are inspired and which are not. In the same way, they say, He also reveals to them the meaning or interpretation of each inspired book. This is often called the Calvinistic or Pietistic criterion. It has been embodied in some of their professions of faith and rests on one of the characteristic doctrines of Calvinism, namely, that by the fall of Adam human nature has become so totally depraved, so entirely helpless in everything religious, that man can do nothing and God must do everything for him; it depends also on a few texts of the New Testament badly interpreted.

But it is without any foundation in fact, and is much more difficult to prove than the truth which it seeks to establish. There is absolutely no evidence for it but the unsupported statement of the individual concerned, and his statement is useless.

To establish the inspiration of Scripture, the testi-

mony must be *objective* and *external.* A merely subjective argument, which varies with the whims and caprices of each individual, can never be made the basis of any revealed doctrine, especially of such an important and fundamental doctrine as that of the inspiration of Scripture.

Besides, this criterion makes God contradict Himself in the most glaring manner; for, if God were really the source of the revelations which are often ascribed to Him and which have caused such endless dissensions in the religious world, He would be responsible for the illusions of the Anabaptists and for the monstrous doctrines of John Calvin, for the extravagances of George Fox, and for the wild ravings of Emanuel Swedenborg. Such contradictions refute one another and show that they are not from God.

It is evident, therefore, that this rule sins against all the requisites of a criterion. It is purely *subjective* and *imaginary* and, in the past, has led to the most extravagant follies and the most reckless fanaticism. (See Milner's *End of Religious Controversy,* 5th, 6th and 7th Letters; 1st Fallacious Rule.)

Many Protestants admit either the uselessness or the insufficiency of all the preceding criteria and contend that the only sufficient proof of inspiration is the *testimony of God,* given by revelation.

So far they are right, and the reason is clear. Inspiration is a supernatural, psychological, internal, invisible act of God. As such, it does not fall under the senses and so cannot be witnessed by any man. Even the writer himself did not necessarily know that

he was inspired. Such knowledge is not essential to the concept of inspiration. A man may feel an impulse to write; so do all of us who write. But he does not necessarily know the *source* of the impulse, whether it comes from above or from within or from below; neither does he know the nature of the impulse, whether it is divine, or human, or diabolical. In such matters, how many have been deceived! Therefore, if the writer ever knows that he was inspired, he knows it only from divine supernatural revelation.

Even Pietists maintain that the proper testimony to the fact of inspiration must come from God by revelation; so far they agree with us and are right; but they disagree with us and are wrong in maintaining that this divine testimony is given "*toties quoties,*" now or at any other time, to each individual Christian by a private, internal, direct, immediate, personal revelation.

Catholics, on the other hand, logically maintain that this divine testimony, like all other truths of revealed religion, was given once for all in the days of the *Apostles,* and was entrusted to the Church to be taught publicly, officially, and securely to all generations to the end of time.

Convinced of the insufficiency of the theory of private, personal, interior, divine revelation, many Protestants admit that God's testimony to the inspiration of Scripture was given as early as the days of the Apostles. So far they agree with us. But they disagree with us in maintaining that this testimony has been safely transmitted down through the ages by mere gen-

eral human tradition, by a series of mere human witnesses. In this they are wrong.

It is very evident that, if thus transmitted, the divine testimony would be constantly exposed to, at least, the danger of being falsified (intentionally or non-intentionally does not matter here), by any one or more of the long series of human witnesses on whose reliability we cannot depend, because they are thoroughly unknown to us.

Even if we suppose that these witnesses properly transmitted the divine testimony, still we could never be sure of that fact. And, even if we were sure of the fact, it might be a sufficient basis for making an act of human, but not an act of divine faith, for which we must depend entirely upon God.

General human tradition is entirely insufficient to prove the inspiration of any book. An absolute certainty is here required, because there is question of divine faith, which, after all, is *the great question.* For human tradition to furnish us with solid grounds for even human certitude, it is necessary that the tradition should be so general, so unanimous, and so uninterrupted as to exclude all important differences of opinion.

But, as a matter of fact, there has never been any such human tradition to the inspiration of Scripture. General human tradition, to be such, should include the tradition of *all* classes of men, not only of Catholics, but also of heretics, for heretics also are human, very human. Now, general human tradition to the

inspiration of Scripture, including that of heretics, has never been unanimous, as is evident from the following facts:

1. The Manichaeans rejected the five books of Moses, saying that they had been composed at the instigation of the Devil.

2. The Gnostics denied the inspiration of the Psalms.

3. The Ebionites rejected the Gospel of St. Matthew and substituted for it a gospel of their own.

4. The Marcionites rejected the Gospels of SS. Matthew, Mark, and John, and some of the Epistles of St. Paul, and received only a mutilated version of St. Luke.

5. Protestants, at different times, have rejected many books of the Bible, especially the deutero-canonical books of the Old and even some of the New Testament.

6. Besides, in the early centuries, there were in circulation many *spurious gospels* and *spurious epistles,* which were accepted by many Christians and rejected by many others.

Therefore, nowhere and at no time, does mere general human tradition furnish any invariable rule or criterion by which to distinguish inspired from non-inspired writings.

The Catholic position is that the testimony of God to the inspiration of Sacred Scripture, like all other dogmas of the Christian religion, was revealed by God to the Church during the days of the Apostles, that it has been preserved from error by the promises of

Christ, that it has been handed down through the ages by divine ecclesiastical tradition, and that it can be interpreted only by the Catholic Church.

Briefly expressed, we know whether books are inspired or not by the testimony of the Catholic Church, which, in such matters, is the same as the testimony of God.

More fully expressed, the Catholic criterion of inspiration may read as follows:

The testimony of Christ and of the Holy Ghost to the inspiration of each and all the books of Sacred Scripture is not fully and adequately found either in Scripture or in mere general human tradition; but is contained partly in Scripture and fully and clearly in divine ecclesiastical tradition, as interpreted by the Catholic Church.

This criterion is nothing new. It is as perpetual in time and as universal in space as Christianity itself. It is the well-known *Catholic rule of faith.* It is the only simple, sufficient, symmetrical, logical, authentic, invariable, public, easily accessible, infallibly certain, and universally applicable criterion of the inspiration, and also of the canonicity, of each and all the books in the Canon of Scripture, as well as of each and all the revealed doctrines of the Christian religion.

The following criticism from *The Bible, its Origin and Nature,* by Professor Marcus Dods, D.D., of Edinburgh, Scotland, pages 31 and 32, will show the helpless confusion of some writers on this fundamental question:

"If you ask a Romanist why he accepts certain

books as canonical, he has a perfectly intelligent answer ready. He accepts these books because the Church bids him do so. The Church has determined what books are canonical, and he accepts the decision of the Church. If you ask a Protestant why he believes that just these books, bound up together in his Bible, are canonical, and neither more nor fewer, I fear that ninety-nine out of a hundred could give you no answer that would satisfy a reasonable man. The Protestant scorns the Romanist, because he relies on the authority of the Church, but he cannot tell you on what authority he, himself, relies. The Protestant watchword is, 'The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible'; but how many Protestants are there who could make it quite clear that, within the bounds of their Bible, they have the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible? If you asked them to show you that no canonical writing has been omitted, and that no uncanonical writing has been received, how will they proceed to do so? If you ask the average Protestant to say why he receives the second Epistle of Peter, which a large part of the early Church declined to receive, or why he accepts the Epistle of James, regarding which Luther himself was more than doubtful — what can he say but that the Church to which he belongs receives them?

"In other words, what is the difference between the Protestant and the Romanist on this cardinal point of canonicity? Do not Protestants and Romanists alike accept their canonical books at the hands of the Church?"

To this question we reply that a Protestant does not accept the testimony of "*the* Church," but of *his* Church, which is quite a different institution.

§ 2. The Proofs of Inspiration

Then, to prove the inspiration of the Bible, we (1) begin with *Scripture,* and (2) end with *Tradition.*

I. Inspiration of the Old Testament

The Old Testament says little or nothing, of course, about its own inspiration. We are, therefore, limited to the New Testament; but even the New Testament itself, we shall not use it or quote it for the present as an *inspired* book, because, at this stage of our work, its inspiration is not yet established, and it would be a vicious circle to quote it as if it were inspired. We shall quote it, however, as a *human document,*— a human document possessing the highest grade of human authority. We here take for granted (as already established) the divinity of Christ and the divine mission and infallible teaching authority of His Church and His Apostles.

The question then reduces itself to this: Are there, in the New Testament, passages in which Christ or His Apostles (either explicitly or implicitly) assert the inspiration of all or of any part of the Old or the New Testament?

Yes; there are in the New Testament many passages in which, to prove especially His Messiahship, Christ quotes the Old Testament and quotes it in such a way as to show that He ascribes to its words a divine,

absolute, and infallible authority,— an authority equal to that of His miracles and equal to the voice of His Father speaking from Heaven. But all this, under the circumstances, presupposes and proves the divine origin and the inspiration of the Old Testament books. See His words, Matt. 5, 18; 26, 31 and 54; Luke 24, 44; John 5, 34–35; 13, 18.

The Apostles do the same thing. St. Peter explicitly ascribes to the Holy Ghost the words of Daniel (Acts 1, 16). St. Paul ascribes to the Holy Ghost the words of Isaias (Acts 28, 25), and to the same divine source the words of Jeremias (Hebrews 10, 15).

Further, the New Testament contains some very express declarations of the inspiration of the Old Testament in two famous passages, the one by St. Peter (II Peter 1, 20–21), and the other by St. Paul (II Tim. 15–16). We will quote them and explain the latter somewhat in detail. 1. "Understanding this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation. For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but the holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Ghost" (II Peter 1, 20–21), or "men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."

2. "But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned and which have been committed to thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which can instruct thee unto salvation, by faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice." (II Tim. 3, 14–16.)

This latter is the most explicit passage in Scripture, bearing on the subject of inspiration. One of its strangest peculiarities is that it can be construed and translated in a great variety of ways. Yet, no matter how it is twisted, it always assures us that there is a Scripture which is "divinely inspired" or "breathed by God," and that such Scripture is profitable for a variety of good purposes.

In this famous passage St. Paul exhorts his disciple, Timothy, to remain firm in the faith and not to be led astray by teachers who try to corrupt both the head and the heart by false doctrines. The Apostle enforces this exhortation by the following considerations:

1. That Timothy had been instructed in the faith by Paul himself, who had received his teachings, not from men nor by men, but by direct revelation from Jesus Christ Himself (Gal. 1, 1);

2. That Timothy had been accustomed from childhood to read the Holy Writings and to derive strength and comfort from them.

Then, to encourage Timothy to persevere in such reading and in the right path, St. Paul gives a beautiful eulogy of Holy Writ, saying:

3. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable, (1) to teach, (2) to reprove, (3) to correct, and (4) to instruct in justice."

It is not easy to see what more need be said to prove that the Old Testament is inspired by God.

We shall explain,

1. The general topic of this exhortation;
2. The meaning of the word "Graphe";
3. The meaning of "Pasa Graphe";
4. The meaning of "Theopneustos"; and
5. The collocation of "Theopneustos" in the sentence.

1. *As to the general topic.* (a) It is evident that, in verse 15, St. Paul is speaking of *Holy Writ,* and not of literature in general. For, according to Hebrew usage, the words TA HIERA GRAMMATA, "sacred writings," can have no other meaning than "Sacred Scripture."

(b) It is equally evident that St. Paul is speaking of the Old Testament; first, because the Jews never had any other Sacred Writings than the Old Testament, and, second, because, when Timothy was a child, no part of the New Testament was yet in existence.

(c) It is also evident that the Apostle is speaking, not of the Hebrew, but of the Greek Old Testament. For, from Acts 16, 1, we learn that Timothy was born of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father, and that he lived at Lystra in Asia Minor, in the diaspora, hundreds of miles from Palestine. Naturally and necessarily, his language, especially in childhood, was the language of the country — Greek — and of course the Old Testament which he read in childhood was the Septuagint or Greek Version of the Old Testament. Now, we know that this Greek Version contained, not

only the protocanonical, but also the seven deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament. Therefore, these deuterocanonical books, also, Paul calls TA HIERA GRAMMATA, "sacred writings."

2. *The Meaning of Graphe.* The word *"Graphe"* is not to be taken in the abstract, that is, as a mere hypothetical or possible writing; but in the concrete, for those actual books, *ta hiera grammata,* which Timothy had read in his childhood. The proof of this is very manifest. Paul's eulogium of Scripture might not necessarily be true of each and every kind of Scripture, without saying whether such Scripture exists or not, and what it might or might not contain. It might not be true, then, that each and every kind of Scripture that could possibly be written would be good and suitable for the four specific purposes mentioned by the Apostle, 1st, to teach, 2ndly, to reprove, 3rdly, to correct, 4thly, to instruct in righteousness.

The word *"Graphe"* originally meant any writing in general, but it has been restricted by the writers of the New Testament so as to mean exclusively the books of the Bible, either in whole or in part. In the Greek New Testament there are forty-five passages in which this word occurs and in every case it refers exclusively to the Bible and never to profane literature or to writings in general. In English and Latin the corresponding word *Scripture* is used in much the same restricted sense.

In the New Testament the word *Graphe* may mean either, (1) some one text or particular passage of the

Bible; or, (2) some whole book of the Bible; or, (3) the entire Old Testament.

The plural, *Graphai,* is also used exclusively for Scripture, not, however, collectively for the whole Bible, but distributively for the separate or different books of which the Bible is composed. In the New Testament, it never refers to writing in general, but only to Sacred Scripture.

3. *Meaning of "Pasa Graphe."* Since in the New Testament, *Graphe* always refers exclusively to Sacred Scripture and never to writings in general, we ask: What is the meaning of *Pasa Graphe, i. e.,* without the definite article? We answer:

(1) According to the strict rules of Greek grammar, *Pasa,* without the definite article, means each, every — *omnis, unaquaque, quaelibet,* and is therefore distributive. Cfr. James 1, 17; 3, 7.

(2) With the definite article, *Pasa* means all, the whole, the entire, *tota, universa,* and is therefore collective. (Cfr. John 17, 1, Apoc. 8, 7.)

However, if a noun, qualified by *Pasa,* is the proper name of a person or place, or is such as cannot be duplicated, the addition of the article does not make it distributive. Now, it is possible, but not probable, that, in the New Testament, the word "*Graphe*" may be the proper name of Scripture, and, if so, it is collective and may be translated "all Scripture." Yet, grammatically considered, the distributive sense seems preferable. It also has this advantage, that it asserts explicitly that inspiration should be ascribed to each

and every separate part of the Old Testament, no matter how small it may be. Still the sense would not be very different, if *Graphe* were taken collectively.

4. *The Meaning of "Theopneustos."* *Theopneustos* occurs but *once* in the New Testament, and in this very text. So its signification must be sought in its etymological formation and in such considerations as the context, the scope of the writer, the subject matter, etc.

Greek verbal adjectives ending in *TOS* are very rarely active. *Empneustos,* breathing freely, is an instance. As a general rule such participles are almost invariably passive, as *Empneustos,* inflated. So *theopneustos,* if active, would mean *Deum spirans;* if passive, it means *a Deo inspiratus, divinitus inspiratus.*

The passive meaning is all the more imperative, when the verb is compounded with *Theos.* Cremer is almost the only authority who defends the active meaning of this participle.[1] But his assertion is opposed to the authority of the best Greek grammarians, lexicographers and commentators, and especially to the early Greek Fathers. In fact, the word can mean only one thing, "inspired by God."

5. *The Position of "Theopneustos."* While the meaning of *theopneustos* is clear beyond cavil, its proper position or collocation in the sentence is very difficult to determine. Yet, strange to say, its mean-

1 Winer-Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek,* 3rd ed., 1882, p. 120, says: "The passive interpretation of this word, in II Tim. 3, 16, can admit of no doubt."

ing remains substantially the same, no matter where the word is located.

We submit a number of translations of this famous verse, many of which depend on the position of this one word.

We remark that, in the Greek text, there is no verb expressed; so a verb must be understood. In such cases the verb "*esti*" is usually supplied and perhaps may here be expressed twice. But the question is, Where shall the missing verb be supplied? Before or after *theopneustos?*

Πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος.—"Every scripture inspired of God, is also profitable." This is the only form of the Greek text:

"*OMNIS Scriptura, divinitus inspirata, utilis est.*" This is the reading of the Clementine Latin Vulgate.

"*Omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata et utilis.*" This is the reading found in many pre-Clementine editions.

"All Scripture, inspired of God, is profitable." This is the reading of the Douay Catholic version.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable." This is the reading of the Authorized or King James Version.

"Every Scripture, inspired of God, is also profitable." This is the reading of the Revised Protestant Version.

The following are some of the many renderings preferred by various scholars:

"All Scripture (inasmuch as, or being, or since, or because) it is inspired, is profitable."

"All inspired Scripture is also profitable."

"All inspired writing is also profitable."

"All Scripture is inspired and is profitable."

Some writers make *theopneustos* an abbreviated, subordinate sentence, giving the reason *why* Scripture is profitable: "All Scripture (inasmuch as, or being, or since, or because it is inspired) is profitable." But for this rendering, we would naturally expect the Greek participle "*ousa*" or "*genomena*" to accompany *theopneustos*.

A few writers would place the participial adjective "inspired" before, instead of after, the subject *Graphe;* as, "All inspired Scripture." But this would seem to imply that St. Paul recognized two classes of Scripture, one inspired, which he mentions here, and another not inspired. But, as we have seen, the word *Graphe* is never used in the New Testament except for inspired writings. Therefore, to speak of all inspired Scripture would make the use of the participle "inspired" superfluous and even tautological.

To avoid this tautology, the word "writing," in its generic sense, is substituted for "Scripture" in the translation and, preceded and qualified by the word "inspired," it asserts that there is such a thing as an "inspired writing," and that is really the essential point. In this rendering no distinction is mentioned or even implied between some Scriptures that are inspired, and some other Scriptures that are not inspired, — a thought that was foreign to the mind of the Apostle.

But, as we have seen, the fatal objection to this explanation is that *Graphe,* in the New Testament, is always used in the specific sense of inspired writings, and never for writings in general. Therefore, "inspired Scripture" or "inspired *Graphe*" is tautological.

Some are of opinion that the conjunction "*kai,*" "*et,*" "and," does not mean "also," but is the ordinary copulative conjunction placed between the two adjectives, "inspired" and "profitable," and that the substantive verb "*is*" is understood and should be supplied twice, as, "All Scripture (is) inspired and (is) profitable." In this case there would be two independent and coordinate sentences. Also two attributes would be affirmed of, or ascribed to, Scripture:— inspiration and profitableness. Thus we would have,

(1) All Scripture is inspired, and
(2) All Scripture is profitable.

II. Inspiration of the New Testament

The arguments from Scripture which prove the inspiration of the Old Testament, cannot be applied to prove the inspiration of the New Testament. Here we must depend chiefly on *divine ecclesiastical tradition.* In the Gospels our Lord never mentions the inspiration of the New Testament, for the very simple reason that, in His day, the New Testament was not yet in existence. The composition of the New Testament

was not begun until about twenty years, and was not completed until about sixty years, after His death and resurrection.

Therefore, the testimony of God to the inspiration of the New Testament was revealed, not by Christ, but by the Holy Ghost, to the Apostles, and by them it, along with the Books, was delivered to the Church to be safeguarded and handed down to the end of time by divine ecclesiastical tradition. See the decree of the Vatican Council, which reads: "These books, having been written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, have God for their author and, *as such,* they were delivered to the Church." (*"Atque ut tales ipsi Ecclesiae traditi sunt."*)[2]

1. The New Testament naturally contains but little evidence to its *own inspiration.* It is not certain that the inspiration of the Apocalypse is affirmed (*ib.* 1, 10; 11; 19; and 19, 9–19), because, though John is called a prophet, he may be so called, not on account of his writings, but on account of the many revelations made to him. In this uncertainty there is no certain, but only a probable, argument in the passages.

2. Neither is it certain that the inspiration of St. Luke's Gospel is asserted by St. Paul (I Tim. 5, 18), when he says: "The Scripture saith, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn'," and,— "The laborer is worthy of his reward." Both quotations are called "Scripture," that is, inspired writings. The second quotation is found in Luke 10, 7; from

2 Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, Session III, Chapter 2nd, "On Revelation."

which fact we might infer that Paul calls St. Luke's Gospel "Scripture"; only that both assertions are found also in Deuteronomy 24, 14; and 25, 4; and this fact might make it appear as if the Apostle had taken both quotations at the same time from the same source,— from Deuteronomy. However, the second quotation resembles much more closely the passage in Luke 10, 7, and we know that Luke was an intimate disciple of Paul.

3. We have something more positive in what St. Peter writes about the inspiration of St. Paul's Epistles.

"As also our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, hath written to you, as also in all his epistles . . . which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." (II Peter 3, 15–16.)

According to the Hebrew idiom, "the wisdom given to him" may refer to the gift of inspiration. This is made still clearer by the words in which Paul's epistles are placed in the same class or category with "the other Scriptures." It is still further confirmed by the assertion that to pervert the meaning of St. Paul's epistles leads to "perdition,"— which could not be said of purely profane literature.

The testimony of Scripture to the inspiration of Scripture, whether of the Old or of the New Testament, is, of course, good as far as it goes; but it is not complete and needs to be supplemented by divine tradition: (1) For the testimony of Scripture to the inspiration of Scripture is not universally applicable to all the *books, i. e.,* to the books not men-

tioned, especially of the New Testament; (2) It is not universally accessible to all men, for few men are in a position to study and interpret passages of Scripture which the most learned have not yet interpreted even to their own satisfaction. Therefore, in this, as in so many other instances, the testimony of Scripture must be supplemented and completed by the testimony of *divine tradition.* This we proceed to do.

Tradition of the Fathers

The earliest Fathers of the Church were not very numerous. Some of them never wrote anything. Those that did, wrote mostly on practical and not on speculative questions. Then, too, many of their writings perished during the persecutions. So it is natural to suppose that their testimony to the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures (which they all took for granted) should be rare and mostly casual and incidental. Yet, relatively many references are found in their writings on this topic, some explicit and some implicit. For want of space we give only a few instances and refer the student to larger works.

St. Clement of Rome, the earliest of the Apostolic Fathers, who died about A. D. 96 to 100, writes as follows: "Look carefully into the Sacred Scriptures, which are the veritable oracles of the Holy Spirit." [3]

St. Ignatius writes: "The divinest prophets, who lived according to Jesus Christ, were inspired by His Grace." [4]

3 I Corinthians, n. 45.
4 Letter to the Magnesians, Chap. 8.

Barnabas writes: "The Lord said through the prophets." [5] "Moses spoke through the Spirit." [6]

St. Justin Martyr says: "David, prophet, and king, speaks thus through the Spirit of prophesy." [7] "The prophet Isaias, being divinely inspired by the Spirit." [8]

Athenagoras writes: "We have witnesses of our creed,— prophets who, inspired by the Spirit, have spoken of God and of the things of God." [9]

Irenaeus writes: "The Holy Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were uttered by the Word of God and His Spirit." [10] And again: "All who foretold Christ, received their inspiration from the Son." [11]

St. Clement of Alexandria says: "I can bring you innumerable Scriptures of which not a jot or a tittle shall pass away; for the mouth of the Lord, the Holy Ghost, has spoken them." [12]

St. Athanasius says: "The Scriptures were written by the divine influence . . . and the Holy Spirit was in their writers." [13]

St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "The Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God and He is their author." [14]

After the fourth century the references of the Church Fathers to inspiration are so numerous, so explicit, and so unanimous that we omit them and refer

5 Epistle, Chap. 9.
6 Epistle, Chap. 10.
7 I Apol., Chap. 40.
8 *Ib.*, Chap. 35.
9 *Plea for Christians*, Chap. 8.
10 *Against Heresies*, Book 11, Chap. 28.
11 *Ib.*, 4, Chap. 7.
12 *Strom.*, 11.
13 *Epist. Fest.*, 39.
14 *Catech.*, 1., 6, 11, 34.

the student to larger works on the subject, where they are found in great abundance.

The inspiration of Sacred Scripture, which, from the days of the Apostles down to our own times, has been taught so emphatically and so unanimously by Fathers, doctors, theologians, Roman pontiffs, and councils, is still more explicitly taught, and has been solemnly defined as an article or dogma of Catholic faith by the ecumenical councils of Trent and of the Vatican. Let us examine their decrees.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) solemnly defined, as an article of Catholic faith, that all the books contained in the Old Latin Vulgate are "sacred and canonical." The decree reads thus: "But if any one will not receive, as sacred and canonical, these entire books, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are found in the Old Latin Vulgate edition, let him be anathema." [15]

The Vatican Council (1870) also expressly defines that all the books of Scripture, as enumerated by the Council of Trent, are sacred and canonical, and divinely inspired, and have God for their author. It says:

"These entire books of the Old and New Testaments, with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the Council of Trent, and as they are contained in the Old Latin Vulgate edition, are to be received as sacred and canonical."

[15] "*Si quis autem libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in Ecclesia catholica legi consueverunt et in veteri vulgata latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit, anathema sit.*" (4th Sess., Decree "*Sacrosancta.*")

"But the Church holds these books as sacred and canonical, not because they were composed by mere human industry and were afterwards approved by her authority, nor merely because they contain revelation without error; but because, having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author and, as such, they have been delivered to the Church herself."

"If any one, therefore, shall not receive, as *sacred* and *canonical,* these entire books of Scripture, with all their parts, as the Council of Trent enumerated them, or shall deny that they are divinely inspired, let him be anathema." [16]

These decrees, both in matter and in form, comply with all the requirements of doctrinal definitions and are infallible and irreformable dogmas of the Catholic faith. They settle the question for Catholics.

§ 3. The Nature of Inspiration

We have proved conclusively that our canonical books are divinely inspired, that is, "have God for their author." But how, and in what sense, and to what extent is God their author? Did God write the

16 "*Qui quidem Veteris et Novi Testamenti libri integri cum omnibus suis partibus, prout in eiusdem Concilii decreto recensentur, et in veteri vulgata latina editione habentur, pro sacris et canonicis suscipiendi sunt.*" . . . "*Eos vero Ecclesia pro sacris et canonicis habet,* [a] *non ideo, quod sola humana industria concinnati, sua deinde auctoritate sint approbati;* [b] *nec ideo duntaxat quod revelationem sine errore contineant;* [c] *sed propterec quod Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti* [d] *Deum habent auctorem,* [e] *atque ut tales ipsi Ecclesiae traditi sunt.*" . . . "*Si quis sacrae Scripturae libros integros cum omnibus suis partibus, prout illos sancta Tridentina Synodus recensuit, pro sacris et canonicis non susceperit aut eos divinitus inspiratos esse negaverit; anathema sit.*" (Dogmatic Constitution on Catholic Faith, Session III, Ch. 2, "On Revelation.")

sacred books with His own hand, as He wrote the tables of the Law for Moses on Mount Sinai, and did He then drop them down from Heaven, all printed and bound, clasped and illuminated? No; He used men as his *instruments* to write with.

But how are we to understand these strange, though not contradictory, attributes of Holy Scripture? We acknowledge that, to some extent, it is a *mystery* and can be explained only approximately, and for the following reasons:

The operations of *God,* both in the supernatural, and even in the natural order, are always mysterious, especially if we insist on knowing precisely *what, how,* and *why* anything is thus and so.

Another reason for the mystery in inspiration is the human *soul,* which, though nearer to us than all else except God, shows that we do not understand even ourselves.

The mystery deepens when, as in the case of inspiration, the Spirit of God works on the spirit of man in such a way as to make him His intelligent, voluntary, and active instrument. The mystery of it consists in the exercise of God's supreme dominion over man, extending to all his faculties, and in the simultaneous existence of man's freedom of will and action under that absolute, irresistible and overwhelming dominion of God.

However, the mystery is not peculiar to this case, for the inspiration of Scripture is not more mysterious, perhaps, than the resurrection of the dead or the restoration of sight to the man born blind or the con-

version of water into wine or the multiplication of the loaves and fishes; and, certainly, it is not more mysterious than creation, redemption, predestination, regeneration, or habitual, actual, or sufficient grace.

Still we can understand some of the mystery. God has established certain general psychological laws which He Himself respects and which we, in some way, understand, and by which, to some extent, the soul is governed, even in inspiration.

We may lay it down as a principle that, whenever God uses His creatures, He uses them according to their respective natures. He uses inanimate beings as inanimate, and governs them by physical laws. He uses brutes as brutes, and governs them by instinct. He uses angels as angels, and governs them, we know not how, but in a manner suited to their angelic intelligences. He uses man as man, and governs him chiefly through reason and free-will. Since, then, God uses no man as he would use a dumb beast, we must conclude that man's noblest faculties — reason, free-will, memory, and imagination — are not suspended under the influence of inspiration. "For the gifts of God are without repentance." The Sacred Writers were not, as the Montanists contended, merely passive; they were not in a trance; they were not in an ecstasy; they were not, like the Cumaean sibyl, bereft of their senses; they were men in full possession of all their mental faculties. In inspiring them God did not deprive them, even momentarily, of any of those gifts which distinguish man from the beasts of the field. On the contrary, it is more in harmony with what we

know of God's ways of dealing with men to suppose that, in inspiring them, he lifted them up a little into His own supernatural atmosphere and perfected their nature by heightening their faculties and guaranteeing them their continued exercise.

We do not pretend to explain inspiration, especially in its minute details, nor to describe its intrinsic nature, nor to measure the precise amount of assistance rendered in the case of each writer. Though some of the mystery can be cleared up, and though every explanation of it removes some of the mystery, yet some of it will always remain.

Something of the nature of inspiration may be discovered by an intelligent and critical study of the Bible, which, being the only product of inspiration that we possess, should, and does, reflect some light on the nature of its cause, inspiration.

Also, by a process of elimination, made possible by doctrinal decisions of the Church, we can exclude certain extreme and manifestly false views and thus narrow down the limits between which the true nature of inspiration must be found. This we shall do at the close of the present section.

Etymological Meaning of Inspiration

The word "inspiration" is derived from the Latin verb *inspiro,* which means to breathe in, into, or upon. The corresponding Greek verb is ἐμπνέω and the noun ἐμπνευστία.

If, to inspiration, we add the adjective divine, divine

inspiration, the corresponding Greek noun is *Theopneustia,* for which see II Tim. 3, 16.

Accordingly, inspiration is a mysterious force; an irresistible energy, exercised on a few chosen men by the Holy Ghost and, because of some analogy between them, graphically described as coming in the form of a breath or a gust of wind. The word, then, means an "inbreathing by God." But God has no body; therefore He has no breath. Hence the word is here used figuratively and metaphorically to describe some mysterious, divine influence and means that the man upon whom God has so breathed or exercised this strange force is inspired, and that the book written by him is, in consequence, also inspired or has God for its author. Inspiration, then, is an act of such a nature as to make God the Author of the Sacred Books.

The true nature of inspiration can be further explained by referring to a word somewhat similar in meaning, though different in derivation, used by St. Peter, when he says: "Prophecy never came by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1, 21.)

The Greek verb φερομένοι may be variously and yet properly translated by either moved or borne along, or carried along, or inspired. In the Acts of the Apostles the same verb is used to express the momentum given to a ship, when the sails are filled by a good stiff gale.

In our definition we say that inspiration is an influence, a power, a force, an energy, an energy in

operation, a potency in exercise, communicated by God to man in the form of a breath, of a gust of wind, by its very nature short-lived and transient, lasting only the time of action and ceasing the moment its effect is realized, *i. e.*, the moment the book is (entirely) written.

The same verb is again used in the Acts to describe the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles on the first Pentecost Sunday, in the following words: "Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a mighty wind borne along, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting . . . and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." [17] Thus far the derivation of the word, which prepares the way for the real definition.

Definition of Inspiration

Biblical inspiration is a supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the Sacred Writer, both determining him to write, and enlightening him while writing, and directing and assisting him to write just what God wishes and no more.

Patrizzi, once professor at the Roman College, says: "Inspiration is a supernatural act determining a man to put down God's thoughts in writing." [18]

Lamy, sometime professor of Scripture in the University of Louvain, says: "Inspiration is a supernatural movement of the Holy Ghost, by which the Sacred Writer is moved to write, and is illumined while

17 Acts 2, 2 and 4.

18 "*Inspiratio est Dei actus hominem excitans ad ipsius sensa scripto excipienda.*"

writing, and is directed so that he can not err and that he writes what God wishes." [19]

Pesch says: "Inspiration is a charismatic illumination of the intellect and a motion of the will and a divine assistance given to the Sacred Writer to write all, and only, those things which God wishes to be written in His name and to be given to the Church." [20]

Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical "On the Study of Sacred Scripture," says: "Hence, because the Holy Ghost employed men as His instruments, we can not therefore say it was these inspired instruments that, perhaps, have fallen into error, and not the primary Author. For, by supernatural power, He so moved and impelled them to write, He so assisted them that the things which He ordered and those things only, they first rightly understood, then willed to write them down faithfully, and finally expressed them in apt words and with infallible truth. Otherwise, it could not be said that He was the Author of all Scripture. Such has always been the persuasion of the Fathers." [21]

19 "*Inspiratio est supernaturalis Spiritus Sancti motus, quo auctor sacer ad scribendum movetur, et inter scribendum illuminatur, ac dirigitur ita ut errare nequeat et scribat ea quae vult Deus.*"

20 "*Inspiratio biblica est charismatica illustratio intellectus et motio voluntatis et assistentia divina hagiographo praestita ad ea omnia et sola scribenda quae Deus suo nomine scribi et Ecclesiae tradi vult.*"

21 "*Ipse* [*Spiritus Sanctus*] *supernaturali virtute ita eos* [*scriptores sacros*] *ad scribendum excitavit et movit, ita scribentibus adstitit, ut ea omnia eaque sola quae Ipse juberet, et recte mente conciperent et fideliter conscribere vellent et apte infallibili veritate exprimerent; secus non Ipse esset auctor Scripturae universae. Hoc ratum semper habuere SS. Patres.*"

Analysis of these Definitions

If the student will analyze these definitions (which are all the same in thought, though different in language) he will remark that three factors are in constant evidence. They are: (1) God, (2) man, and (3) the book.

He will further notice in these definitions the constant recurrence of two groups of words, of four words each. They are:

(I) 1) intellect, 2) will, 3) memory and 4) imagination; and

(II) 1) illumination, 2) impulse, 3) direction and 4) assistance.

The second group adapts itself to the nature and to the needs of the first group, as we shall see later.

God is the source, Man is the channel, and Book is the result or term of inspiration. Further,

1. God inspires actively and transiently;

2. Man is inspired passively and transiently;

3. The Book is inspired passively, terminatively, and permanently.

Let us explain these fundamental differences in order:

1. God. God inspires both actively and transiently.

(1) He inspires *actively;* the verb is in the active voice. The principal rôle, of course, belongs to God.

(2) He inspires *transiently;* inspiration was given for the very definite purpose of producing an inspired book. It is highly proper, therefore, that this act

should cease as soon as it has produced its intended effect.

As we shall see elsewhere, the whole result of inspiration, the entire book with all its parts, is to be ascribed to God as its *principal author.*

2. MAN. Man is inspired passively and transiently.

(1) He is inspired *passively,* because he is the ready, obedient, pliant and docile instrument in the hands of God, and is more acted upon than acting.

(2) He is inspired *transiently,* because he ceases to be inspired, as soon as he has accomplished the task for which he was chosen.

We say man is inspired, but *how much* of him is inspired? The whole man? Both body and soul? Of the body, we may easily suppose, head and heart and hand may be in some way involved. But the *soul* especially is inspired and, above all, its highest and most important faculties.

This is the mind of Leo XIII, who tells us that inspiration is in the nature of a command, and that it reaches and influences the soul and all its best faculties. He says: "For, by supernatural power, the Holy Ghost so moved and impelled them [the Sacred Writers] to write, He so assisted them while writing, that those things which He commanded and those things only, they first rightly understood, then willed to write them down faithfully, and finally expressed them exactly and with infallible truth. Otherwise it could not be said that He was the Author of the entire Scripture." [22]

22 "*Nam supernaturali Ipse virtute ita ad scribendum excitavit et movit,*

If we analyze this passage we shall see that the action of God on the writers was so varied and so effectual,

(a) That they rightly *understood* in their mind,

(b) That they *willed* to write faithfully,

(c) That they *expressed* exactly and with infallible truth all those things, and those things only, which He commanded.

This clearly means that inspiration reached and influenced all the noblest faculties of the soul, *intellect, will, memory* and *imagination.* Let us take them up in order:

a) The Intellect

The Intellect is the cognitive faculty, the faculty that thinks, perceives, reasons, knows the truth. In good English it is usual to say that the intellect is *illumined* or *enlightened.*

Accordingly, in inspiration, the Holy Ghost supernaturally enlightens the intellect or understanding of the Sacred Writer and shows him both what topics are to be handled and the order and manner of handling them. In fact it is not easy to see how God could be called the author of Scripture unless He positively selected the ideas, or in some way passed upon the thoughts to be committed to writing in His name.

At the same time, this should not be understood as a *revelation* of the thoughts to be written down. We

ita scribentibus adstitit, ut ea omnia eaque sola quae Ipse iuberet, et recte mente conciperent, et fideliter conscribere vellent, et apte infallibili veritate exprimerent; secus non ipse esset auctor sacrae Scripturae universae." (Encyclical *"Providentissimus."*)

shall see more fully elsewhere that revelation is *not* a part of inspiration.

Theologians are not agreed as to the quantity or the quality of the supernatural illumination given to the Sacred Writers during inspiration. It may have varied somewhat according to the circumstances.

We have frequently had occasion to repeat that it is not essential to the notion of inspiration that the Sacred Writer should ever know that he was or had been inspired.

b) The Will

According to English usage, we may say that the will is *moved, urged, impelled, determined, induced, persuaded* to give its consent to any proposal or to what God wills absolutely.

Accordingly, in inspiration, there is, on the part of God, an impulse given by the Holy Ghost, which effectually impells the will of the writer to consent to do what God wishes him to do.

This is the first step in the process, and is often called " antecedent inspiration " or, *" inspiratio ad scribendum."*

Without some such positive and effective initiative on the part of God, determining the will of the writer, it is difficult to see how God can ever be the author, nay, the principal author, of S. Scripture.

c) Memory and Imagination

One purpose of inspiration is to make the writer, not only perceive, but also write down with infallible

accuracy, "all those things, and only those things, which God commands."

Accordingly, inspiration must extend its influence to the executive faculties, memory and imagination, the active co-operation of which is necessary to put such purposes into effect.

There is some difference of opinion among theologians as to the precise nature of this influence. Some consider it a mere *negative assistance* which prevents the writer from falling into error. Others more properly consider it a positive direction which enables the writer to put down all that, and only that, which God wishes to have written.

It is worth while for the student to remember that inspiration, that is, the supernatural illumination, impulse, assistance and direction, as above described, continues *during the entire process* of composing the book, and is often called "concomitant inspiration" or "*inspiratio inter scribendum.*" From the nature of the case it is manifest that there is, and there can be, no such thing as "subsequent inspiration," as some Catholics have imagined.

3. The Book.

The Book is inspired (1) passively, (2) terminatively, and (3) permanently.

(1) The Book is inspired *passively,* because written by an inspired man. It becomes inspired in the very instant in which it is written — while it is being written. The inspiration of the writer is the cause of the inspiration of the Book; also the cause of the very

existence of the book. It would, indeed, be a very different book, if written by the same writer on more or less the same topics, but without inspiration.

(2) The Book is inspired *terminatively,* because inspiration terminates in the production of the Book and goes no further. It has reached its term.

(3) The Book is inspired *permanently;* it remains inspired ever afterwards or, at least, as long as it remains morally and substantially the same book as it was when it left the hands of the Sacred Writer. In other words, inspiration ceases as an *act,* but remains in its *results,*— in the Book.

The divine efficiency of inspiration, in some way not always perhaps the same, affects the whole book; affects the ideas and the thoughts which it contains; affects the order and the disposition of its materials; affects the literary form, whether prose or poetry and what kind of prose or poetry; affects, in some way, even the language in which its thoughts are clothed. The Book is a divine-human book. It is the written word of God and man, and possesses an infallible divine and human authority.

General Nature of Inspiration

In the past some of our writers held that God inspired the soul of the sacred writer *through the body,* either by spoken words addressed to the ear, or by written words addressed to the eye, or by other signs or images of thought presented to the mind and in a manner often opposed to the mental habits of the writer.

But in the last few decades much of this has been discredited and abandoned. A less mechanical and a more philosophical and psychological theory has been extensively adopted by scripturists and theologians of all shades and varieties of opinion and of every school of theology. In other words, there has been a return from the exaggerated views of the last few centuries to the more moderate and more reasonable teachings of (1) the *early Fathers* of the Church, (2) the *medieval Schoolmen* and (3) the great theologians of more *recent times.*

As this new theory may not be familiar to many of our readers, we shall endeavor to explain it, as clearly as is consistent with brevity, but without making ourselves responsible for it in all its details, as follows:

Since God did not wish to write the Sacred Books with His own hand, as He had written the tables of the law for Moses on Mount Sinai, He chose men to write them for Him.

But in which of the many possible capacities did God wish men to write for Him? Simply as His *instruments;* nothing more.

1. This is the common opinion of the early *Fathers,* who were accustomed to look upon the inspired penmen as so many instruments in the hand of God to write with.

St. Theophilus of Antioch calls them "*organa Theou,*" the tools, implements, instruments of God.[23] Many other Fathers use similar language.

St. Augustine says that the Sacred Writers were

[23] *Ad Autolycum,* lib. II, 9. Cf. *ibid.,* n. 10, et III, n. 23.

members of Christ's Mystical Body; "they are His hands; He is their *Head;* He writes with them, using them as instruments," [24] but, remember, not as senseless instruments.

Such expressions are so frequently and so uniformly used by the early Fathers, that we feel compelled to conclude that they are not oratorical flourishes, but are the language of serious conviction.

2. The teaching of the *medieval Schoolmen* on this subject is summarized by St. Thomas Aquinas in these few words: *"Spiritus sanctus auctor, homo vero instrumentum"* (God is the author, man is the instrument).[25]

3. The same idea has been re-echoed for *modern theologians* by Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical, *"Providentissimus Deus,"* where he says: *"Spiritus Sanctus assumpsit homines tanquam instrumenta ad scribendum."* (God took men as His instruments to write with.)

The one fundamental idea in this explanation of inspiration is that the Sacred Writer is *merely an instrument in the hand of God* to write with, much as the pen is an instrument in the hand of man to write with. The Church seems to have adopted this doctrine, though without expressly defining it. (See the word *"Conscripti"* in the Decree of the Vatican Council.)

The theologians and exegetes who are convinced that the philosophy of St. Thomas furnishes the best

24 *De Consensu Evang.*, 1, 35, n. 54.
25 Quodlib. VII, quaest. 6, art. 16.

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explanation of the intrinsic nature of inspiration, are becoming more and more numerous. We follow the leader.

St. Thomas thus explains the idea: *"Idem effectus causae principali et causae instrumentali attribuitur."* The same effect is ascribed to the *principal* cause and to the *instrumental* cause. *"Sed ita ut non partim a Deo et partim ab instrumento fiat."* But not in such a way as to suppose that one part of the book comes from God only, and another part from man only. *"Sed totus ab utroque."* All comes from each, but from each in a different manner. *"Effectus totus attribuitur principali, et instrumento etiam idem totus effectus."* The total effect is ascribed to the principal cause, and the same total effect is ascribed also to the instrument.[26]

"Holy men of God spoke," this is the human element; "Carried along by the Holy Ghost," this is the divine element. Thus, the Bible is the joint production of God and man. It is all from God, its source and principal author, and it is all through man, its channel, and all by man, its secondary, subordinate, instrumental author. The conclusion is: The Bible is never to be regarded as merely human nor as merely divine, nor as partly human and partly divine, but as all human and all divine. All human, because written by man, and all divine, because inspired by God. These two factors are everywhere present and should be everywhere recognized, if we are to understand the Bible in its true light.

The student should clearly realize what is meant

[26] *Contra Gentes*, III, 70.

by saying that the Sacred Writer is an instrument for God to write with, an intelligent, free, plastic and perfectly docile instrument, yes, but still only an instrument and much like other instruments.

When we say that God uses men as His instruments to write with, we, of course, mean that He uses whatever is best in them for such a purpose. Now, the best thing in them for the purpose is the soul with its highest faculties, intellect, will, memory and imagination. Without the exercise of just those faculties no man can write a book, no man can write any book. Therefore, if God uses men to write for Him, He uses just those self-same faculties and no others, for no others are adapted to the work.

We shall endeavor to explain this in the simplest and clearest language. In inspiring Holy Writ, God supernaturally used the *same human faculties which the writer himself would have used,* if he had not been inspired. That is to say: For this purpose, God thought with the writer's mind, wished with the writer's will, remembered with the writer's memory, and clothed the thoughts in the writer's imagination. And all this, because, according to sound philosophy and psychology, it belongs to the *intellect* to perceive thoughts, to form judgments, to dispose them in order, to co-ordinate and bind them together; it belongs to the *will* to move, to urge, to compel the executive faculties (memory and imagination) to go to work and to write what is to be written; it is the duty of the *memory* to recall to mind both abstract and concrete truth, historical facts, as well as words and their con-

struction; it is the peculiar province of the *imagination,* according to St. Thomas, to present ideas in suitable attire, or to clothe the thoughts in fitting and often figurative language. All this in general, even when there is no question of inspiration.

Thus, in inspiration, God adapts Himself to the instrument used; He accommodates Himself to the complex nature of the man whom He has chosen to be His *living, intelligent, willing, active, plastic* instrument. Thus, God speaks, acts, and writes *by* him, and *with* him, and *through* him in the production of the book. Making all due allowance for the many and very considerable differences between an intelligent, *living* instrument, and an inert, *lifeless* instrument, we need not hesitate to say that God uses man as his instrument *very much as a man uses a pen* or other instrument to write with.

When translated into specific language, what we have just said means, and is intended to mean, that God wrote Sacred Scripture by, with, and through the writers, using them the while as instruments to write with. *"Spiritus sanctus auctor, homo vero instrumentum."* [27]

It becomes more and more evident that we should take these words in their *strictly literal* sense. The inspired man, though ever so superior to mere senseless instruments, is yet *a mere instrument,* just like other instruments, especially in this important respect, that, though endowed with reason and free will, he is so submissive to the higher Will that he never

27 St. Thomas.

asserts himself, never exercises those faculties *motu proprio,* never does anything of his own initiative, never gets in any work of his own, independently of the Principal Cause, and wrote *all* that, and *only* that, which God wished him to write and no more; else he would, in so far, cease to be an instrument.

From this it clearly follows that the Bible is never to be regarded as merely human or as merely divine, nor as partly human and partly divine, but as *all human and all divine.* All human, because all written by man, and all divine, because all inspired by God. This is clearly the meaning of the words of St. Thomas already quoted.

The operation of God and the co-operation of the inspired man are blended in the unity of one and the same vital act, in such a way that the composition of the book, which is the result of the common action, should be ascribed both to God and to man, but to each in a different way, for God is the principal Author, and man is the mere instrument. Each writes the whole book, in all its parts, but each after his own fashion.

Even where there is no question of writing under inspiration, the man writes the whole book, and the pen also writes the whole book, no more and no less. In the case of inspiration, the concurrent action of the instrument is both passive and active at the same time; it is moved to act or is made to act, and it acts.

Inspiration is not an ordinary grace, but is a special gift of God, given to but a few chosen men in the entire history of religion, given under special con-

ditions, and given, not for the personal sanctification of the recipient, but for the benefit of the Church at large. In other words, it is a "*gratia gratis data,*" and not a "*gratia gratum faciens.*" It does not necessarily presuppose or confer sanctifying grace on the recipient, though we are assured by St. Peter that the writers of the Old Testament were holy: "Holy men of God spoke, being inspired by the Holy Ghost." [28]

In fact we know of nothing else like inspiration in the whole wide field of nature and of grace. Compared with the action of ordinary actual grace, whether sufficient or not, inspiration is more efficacious on the part of God. As to those supernatural actions which are done by us in the state and with the help of grace, and which merit a supernatural reward in heaven, they are *our* actions. Of them, in the prayer of the Church, we say: "*Actiones nostras, quaesumus Domine*" . . . "*ut nostra oratio et operatio*" . . .

Such actions are attributed to the *human agent,* who, in this case, is not an instrument, whereas the inspired book is attributed to *God.* In the first case, *we* perform the act and God co-operates with us by His grace. In the second case, that of inspiration, *God* performs the act, and we co-operate with Him as instruments. He is the principal and responsible author of the entire book.

It is well to remember that inspiration, like any other grace of God, does not destroy nature. It does not absorb, it does not paralyze, it does not suspend,

[28] II Pet. 1, 21.

even momentarily, the exercise of man's mental faculties.

It is only reasonable to suppose that any principal cause, who intends to use an instrument, would be pleased to find it in good condition for the work. So, instead of destroying its usefulness, he will endeavor to improve its efficiency. If he finds it dull, he will sharpen it; if he finds it rusty, he will polish it; and this for the simple reason, that, the more perfect the instrument, the easier and the better is the work done. This holds not only in the case of lifeless tools, but also in the case of living, intelligent, free beings, whom God chooses as instruments to do His work. It serves His purpose better to leave to them the exercise of their mental faculties, only elevating them and perfecting them, so as to enable them to do their work, not only as well as usual, but even better than usual.

The philosophy of it all seems to be this: Inspiration does not reach the soul through the body, that is, through the eyes or ears or other senses of the body; but, on the contrary, it reaches the body through the soul. It proceeds from within outwards. Its source is God, who is *within* the soul and acts directly on its highest faculties, urging, enlightening, assisting, and directing them to do their work. For the Apostle says: "In God we live and move and have our being." This means that, by His immensity, God necessarily envelops the soul round about on every side and penetrates it through and through; and there, where the

spirit of man comes in vital contact with the spirit of God, there is where inspiration takes place.

Nothing is more difficult to grasp, strange to say, than the operations of the human mind, though so near to us. It is mind seeking to understand mind, seeking to understand itself. But the mystery becomes still more impenetrable when God, blending His action with ours, adds mystery to mystery and acts *in* us, and *by* us, and *with* us, and *through* us, and produces one and the same indivisible result, a divine-human book; a book all human, and a book all divine. This is the teaching of St. Thomas, as apparent from the passage above quoted.

Here we may ask two questions: (1) How does an efficient cause treat an instrument? (2) How does an instrument behave in the hands of the efficient cause?

(1) As to the first: How, in general, does the artist or the mechanic use his tools? Certainly no intelligent principal cause will purposely dull or blunt or otherwise injure the tools on which he depends to do his work. On the contrary, the first thing he does is to polish, repair, sharpen, perfect his instruments, and to put them in the best condition so as to make them better fit to do their work. All this according to the proverb: "Neither wise men nor fools can do good work without good tools."

(2) As to the second: How, in general, does an instrument behave in the hand of the efficient cause? We lay it down as a fundamental and manifest principle that an instrument, so far as it is an instrument,

can do nothing of its own initiative; that is, it can neither begin to act, nor can it continue to act, unless moved thereto by the principal cause. It is peculiar to the very idea of an instrument, of any instrument, that is really an instrument, that it moves only as it is moved, that is, it moves only when it is moved by another. This holds in a very special manner of any instrument in the hands of God. In such a case the principle holds: *"Quidquid movetur, ab alio movetur."*

To show still further the reasonableness of all this, we ask: Who ever heard of the mallet and chisel of the sculptor starting off of their own accord to carve a statue out of the block of marble? Who ever heard of the hammer of the smith, or the plane of the carpenter continuing to work, after the mechanic had laid them aside and had ceased to wield them? Or does the brush of the painter ever begin to paint, or continue to paint, of its own free will, before the artist has begun, or after he has ceased, to manipulate them? No, not once.

Now God used the Sacred Writers much as the mechanic uses his tools. He uses men as instruments to write with. He writes *with* them, and *by* them, and *through* them, and thus produces the book. He alone is the author of the book, in the proper sense of the word. He is also the writer, the scriptor, of the book. Thus, God writes with men, much as men write with a pen, only not mechanically. *"Qui facit per alios, facit per se."*

If this explanation of inspiration holds good, it is

as clear as anything can be that all theories about partial inspiration and the presence of error taught in Holy Writ are impossible and absurd.

We leave it to metaphysicians and speculative theologians to show whether this mysterious touch of the Spirit of God on the cognate spirit of man,— this gentle, yet irresistible pressure, of the Infinite on the finite, changing it, and transforming it, and subjugating it at will,— produces its effects by moral suasion or by physical compulsion.

Verbal Inspiration

We have proved that all the thoughts, truths or ideas in S. Scripture are divinely inspired. Shall we say that the *words* also, in which the thoughts are expressed, are inspired? Shall we say that not only the inward substance, but also the outward form, are both inspired?

The early Fathers of the Church, naturally, never discussed this question *ex professo;* but it is evident from the whole tenor of their writings that they believed in verbal *inspiration,* and that some of them believed even in an exaggerated form of it, called verbal *dictation,* which we reject.

In the IXth century, the doctrine of verbal inspiration was vigorously attacked by St. Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, but without producing many converts.

After his time, we hear little more about the question, till, in 1587, Lessius and Hamelius, professors of theology at the University of Louvain, in their

famous propositions, rejected in general the then prevalent theory of verbal inspiration.

After the heat of this controversy had somewhat abated, exegetes and theologians remained divided in opinion as to the merits of the problem.

In the meantime many Protestants defended the theory not only of verbal dictation, but also of *mechanical* inspiration and maintained that not only the words of the Sacred Text, but also the vowel points and the punctuation marks were inspired.

During the XIXth century, the theory of verbal inspiration, as understood at that time, was generally denied by our scripturists and theologians, among whom are to be mentioned Cardinal Franzelin, Schmidt, Crets, Brucker, Ubaldi, Pesch, and many others.

However, in the last few decades, we have witnessed a sudden change of front, brought about, perhaps, by a more general study of Scholastic philosophy and a greater regard for the teachings of St. Thomas and Pope Leo XIII. In consequence, the theory of verbal inspiration has regained much of the ground lost in the previous two hundred years, or, rather, a new theory of verbal inspiration has taken the place of the former theory, which was really more like verbal dictation than like the present theory of verbal inspiration.

This *new theory of verbal inspiration* is now boldly defended by such writers as Cardinal Billot, S.J., K. Schaezler, Le Hir, S.S., Grandvaux, Tanquerey, S.S., Bruneau, S.S., Levêsque, S.S., Brassac, S.S., Pêquès, O.P., Zanecchia, O.P., Mangenot, Fernandez,

S.J., Calmes, Bainvel, S.J., and many others, both secular and regular, and of both the narrow and the broad gauge schools of theology.

Many writers, a few centuries ago, identified verbal inspiration either with mechanical inspiration, or with verbal dictation, and explained it in such a way as to make it mean that every word and syllable and letter was supernaturally communicated to the writer, with little or no effort or power on his part to control the choice of words. In such cases, God was represented as speaking *at,* or *to,* or *into* the writer, or as speaking from a distance, or as from without inwards, by verbal dictation, or by some interior divine operation equivalent to verbal dictation, thus presenting internally to the mind of the writer the very words that he should write, and impelling him to write just those particular words and no others.

But the modern theory of verbal inspiration, which we now endeavor to explain, takes a higher and more reasonable view of inspiration. It is less mechanical and more dynamic than the earlier theory.

In the modern view, the soul is directly inspired, at least all its higher faculties and powers (*dynameis*), intellect, will, memory, imagination, are directly inspired, and while inspired, do the rest. The intellect perceives the truth and judges that it should be written down. The will commands the memory and the imagination (which are the executive faculties), to do the work and to write the book. The memory recalls to mind, and the imagination selects from among them the proper words to express the thought.

From this it follows that, because the words were recalled to mind by an inspired memory, and because they were adjusted and adapted to the proper expression of the thought by an inspired imagination, they are as much inspired as are the thoughts themselves. Such words are recalled, examined, passed upon, adjusted, constructed, adapted and adopted for a definite purpose by an inspired soul, *i. e.,* by faculties aroused and intensified by the gift of inspiration. Surely, if such words are not inspired, so neither are the thoughts inspired. From the very nature of inspiration, such words cannot help being inspired. They are inspired as a matter of course.

But it is objected: It is certain that each writer, while inspired, retains his own grammar, his own syntax, his own vocabulary, his own peculiar rhetoric throughout. The Holy Ghost did not change these peculiarities. Therefore, the words of the Sacred Books are not inspired.

To this we reply: We admit the premise, but we deny the conclusion. The newer theory of verbal inspiration is compatible with, and adapts itself to, the greatest variety of literary tastes, educational acquirements, mental endowments, and general culture. It is perfectly compatible with the author's own way of thinking and reasoning, with his own peculiar style of exposition, with his own peculiar process of argumentation, and with his own logical methods.

We also infer that the inspired man retained possession of his own peculiar grammar and syntax and vocabulary and rhetoric, and consequently of his own

peculiar style of language. He was inspired to use all these gifts, but to use them better than he otherwise would.

But, we are asked, why should God inspire a man to use his own style of language? It is the only style he has and, whether inspired or not, he must needs use it; unless inspiration gives him another and a better style, which does not seem to have been the case.

To this we reply, answering one question by asking another: Why should God inspire a man to use his own logic? It is the only logic he has and, whether inspired or not, he must needs use it; unless inspiration gives him another and a better logic, which does not seem to have been the case.

We might continue and ask: Why did God inspire the writers to use their own intelligence, their own will, their own memory, their own imagination, their own powers of reason, their own way of looking at things, their own voice with its many modulations, their own favorite ideas, their own type of theology, often peculiar to each writer, as is the case of John and Paul?

The plain fact is, the inspired man is inspired to be himself, to *be at his best* and to *do his best* with those selfsame peculiar mental faculties with which Mother Nature provided him. He is inspired to use, not another man's, but his own best gifts; only he is inspired to use them better than usual. Inspiration produces this betterment, produces these improved results.

The arguments which we have quoted to prove

verbal inspiration are based upon the very idea of inspiration and on the laws of human psychology.

As we have seen, the purpose of inspiration is not only to make the writer *perceive* thoughts, but also to make him *write* them down in such a way that the inspired books, just as they left the writer's hand, are absolutely and entirely the work of God and the work of man also. Now, if the substance alone came from the positive act of God only, and if the language or the material form alone came from the writer only, and is to be ascribed to him and to him exclusively, we ask: Can it be said absolutely and without restriction that the books, just as they exist, including the literary characteristics which distinguish them, are entirely and exclusively the work of God? It cannot be said.

Catholic writers who, in general, reject the theory of verbal inspiration, do not reject it absolutely and in every sense of the word. They all admit that inspiration, in *some* way and to *some* extent, concerns the language, at least in the way of general supervision. This has never been denied by any Catholic scholar. We admit the same thing, but we carry it farther.

All admit that, in certain exceptional parts of Scripture, there is a verbal inspiration given to enable the writer to record those revealed truths which are called *mysteries* and which exceed the capacity of the writer to understand and, still more, to express in proper language; also to record Messianic and other prophecies, the exact meaning of which the writer did not always clearly understand and, therefore, could not always clearly and correctly express, unless the words were

inspired. In all such cases, Catholic writers admit that, not only the thoughts, but also the very words must have been inspired and sometimes even dictated.

The only question, then, is to enquire how inspiration extends to the words and to what extent. Is it partial-verbal or plenary-verbal inspiration, as well as plenary-real inspiration?

A book is thought expressed in words. Both elements are essential to the idea of a book. We sometimes hear of thoughtless books; but whoever saw a wordless book? The thing is impossible. So, if God inspired men to write books, He must have inspired them to write the words also, for the words are an integral part of the book.

§ 4. The Extent of Inspiration

It is an article of faith that all canonical Scripture is divinely inspired. But the question arises: How far does inspiration extend among books? To how many books does it extend? Does it extend to all the books in the canon? Does it extend also to some other books not in the canon, *e. g.,* to the Book of Henoch, or to the Epistle of Clement, or to the Pastor of Hermas? As the discussion of these questions belongs to the *History of the Canon,* we shall here say no more about them than to affirm that inspiration extends to all the seventy-three books in our canon, and probably to no others.

Accordingly, our present question is this: Within the limits of each of these seventy-three canonical books, how far does inspiration extend?

Until the last few centuries, Catholic tradition was unanimous in maintaining that inspiration extends to all the authentic parts of Scripture without exception. But for the last two or three centuries a few Catholics have contended that inspiration extends to all the dogmatic and moral parts of Scripture, and to parts intimately connected with faith and morals, but no further. This was the opinion of Erasmus, Holden, Chrismann, Lenormant, Rohling, and a few others, though with slight differences of opinion.

The Catholic doctrine is that, within the limits of the canonical books, inspiration extends (1) to all their authentic *material* parts, books, chapters, verses, phrases, etc., and (2) to all their *formal* parts, ideas, thoughts, doctrines, etc.

This proposition is proved from Scripture, from the Fathers and from Church authority.

St. Paul says, "All Scripture is divinely inspired." The phrase *pasa graphé,* without the article, is regularly distributive and means *omnis,* every, each, particular part of Scripture; and is not collective, which would mean all, the whole, *tota universa.* The sense, then, is that each and every particular part of Scripture, without distinction of any kind, is inspired.

The Fathers and the medieval Schoolmen are unanimous, and modern theologians are practically unanimous, on this subject.

The authority of the Church is equally unanimous. The councils of Trent and of the Vatican emphatically declare that "those entire books, with all their parts [not merely their doctrinal or moral

parts] are inspired." Many of these books are almost entirely historical and contain little or no doctrine, such as Kings, Paralipomenon, Esdras, Nehemias.

Popes Leo XIII and Pius X extend inspiration to absolutely *all* parts of Scripture. Pope Leo in his encyclical says: "It is absolutely forbidden either to narrow down inspiration to certain parts only of Sacred Scripture, or to admit that the Sacred Writer has erred." [29]

Pius X in his decree "*Lamentabili*" maintains the following proposition: "Divine inspiration is to be extended to all Scripture in such a way as to preserve *each* and *all* its parts from error." [30]

According to what precedes, the following conclusions are justified:

1. All Catholics agree that inspiration extends to all the *books* and *fragments* of books, whether protocanonical or deuterocanonical, that are found in the canon of the Church. This is an article of Catholic faith, as promulgated by the councils of Trent and the Vatican. It is "*de fide divina et catholica.*"

2. It is also certain that inspiration extends to all the *dogmatical, moral, prophetical,* and *historical* parts of Scripture, especially if the historical facts are of some importance. This is, at least, "*de fide certa.*"

3. It is also certain that inspiration extends to all the *ideas, thoughts,* and *teachings* contained in the

[29] "*At nefas omnia fuerit, aut inspirationem ad aliquas tantum sacrae Scripturae partes coangustare, aut concedere sacrum ipsum errasse auctorem.*"

[30] "*Inspiratio divina ita ad totam Scripturam Sacram intenditur, ut omnes et singulas ejus partes ab omni errore praemuniat.*"

Sacred Books; that is, it extends to all the *contents* of Scripture in such a way as to exclude from it all positive and formal error. This is, at least, "*de fide theologica.*"

4. It is certain enough that inspiration extends to the "*obiter dicta*" of Sacred Scripture.

5. Some affirm and some deny that inspiration extends to the *general trend* and to the *whole tenor* of the book, to the logical sequence of ideas, to the chronological order of *events,* to the arrangement of parts and to the distribution of materials, as well as to the figures of speech and other embellishments of style.

6. Some affirm and some deny that inspiration extends to the language, to the *very words* of the text, and that, consequently, Scripture is verbally inspired.

§ 5. The Effects of Inspiration

The question of the *effects* of inspiration is closely related to the question of its *extent.* They are as intricate as they are important.

Accordingly, we ask whether plenary inspiration is compatible with error or whether it necessarily implies plenary infallibility or exemption from all error of whatsoever kind.

The topic is so vast and so complicated that we think it better for the student that we confine ourselves to a consideration of the principal effect of plenary inspiration, that is, *plenary infallibility,* and that we treat the subject in its broadest outlines, which the student may fill out by subsequent study and investigation. We

shall not describe in detail the process by which results have been obtained. We shall rather state the case and announce the conclusions reached by the most competent scholars and by ecclesiastical authority.

There are three classes of men who deny the inerrancy in whole or in part of S. Scripture: (1) Rationalists, (2) Rationalizing Protestants and (3) Liberal Catholics, but each class for different reasons.

All Rationalists reject, of course, the inerrancy of Scripture, as well as everything else supernatural.

Most Protestants, until 200 or 300 years ago, admitted the inerrancy of Scripture. Now relatively few admit it, even in matters religious.

All Catholics from the days of the Apostles stoutly maintained the inerrancy of Scripture in *all* things, even in things not bearing on faith and morals.

But for the last 100 years, a few, a very few, Catholics, while maintaining the plenary inspiration of Scripture, went so far as to restrict its infallibility to things pertaining to faith and morals. Among these may be mentioned Lenormant, Bartolo, Didiot, and, perhaps, d'Hulst.

The traditional doctrine of the Church is summarized in the following.

Proposition

There is no error, and there can be no error, taught in the words of the sacred writers.

This is universal and without exception. No matter what may be the topics treated in Scripture, whether doctrinal, or moral, or prophetical, or historical, or

scientific,— all is infallibly true. Plenary inspiration necessarily implies or supposes plenary infallibility; however, the proposition needs explanation.

State of the Question

1. It is possible that a book exclusively human in origin, such as a history or an arithmetic, may be, *de facto,* free from all error. But the Sacred Scriptures, both *de facto* and *de iure,* are free from error in virtue of their divine origin or author. They are free, not only from the *presence* of error, but also from the very *possibility* of error, that is, they are infallible. By error we mean a contradiction or a discrepancy between the judgment formed by the mind and the object about which it is formed.

2. We say, " There is no error taught in the words of the inspired writers." In Scripture there are some statements originally made by profane authors and quoted by the sacred writer, sometimes with approval and sometimes only for what they are worth, and sometimes only to be refuted. When the sacred writer does not accept them as his own and does not assume responsibility for them, there may be error in such quotations.

3. When we say, " There is no error in the words of the inspired writers," we mean there is no error in their words, when understood in the sense intended by the Sacred Writers or in the sense given them by the Church, but there may be, and there sometimes is, error in the sense foisted upon the words by irresponsible readers or incompetent interpreters.

4. When we say, "There is no error in the words of the inspired writers," we, of course, mean there is no error in *their* words, in the words which *they* wrote, in the original autographic words of the text, as it left the hands of the writer, and before it fell into the hands of careless copyists or incompetent translators. Then, so far as the words of the autographic copy have been badly transcribed or badly translated, they may contain error. It would be too much to hold a writer responsible for what has happened to his words hundreds of years after he is dead and gone. Our proposition thus understood, we now come to the

Proofs of the Infallibility of Scripture

They are found in Scripture and Tradition.

(1) *Scripture:* Our Lord in the Gospel says, "Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. 5, 18.) "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fall." (Luke 16, 17.) "All things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me." (Luke 24, 44.) "The scripture cannot be broken." (John 10, 35.) "Men, brethren, the Scripture must needs be fulfilled." (Acts 1, 16.) The vigorous language of these passages clearly supposes and proves plenary infallibility. The first of these passages refer to the law of Moses only; the last refer to the entire Old Testament, to the law, the prophets, and the psalms.

(2) *Tradition:* (a) The *Fathers* are seldom so

categorical and so unanimous on any doctrinal question, unless formally defined by the Church. For, while pagans, Jews and heretics harassed them with objections against Scripture, yet in all Christian antiquity, not one Father, in order to extricate himself from his embarrassment, ever thought of sacrificing the doctrine of the plenary infallibility of the Bible.

(b) The *medieval Schoolmen* were no less explicit and emphatic. Let St. Thomas speak for them all. He says: "Error cannot be found in the Sacred Scriptures, which were given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost." [31]

(c) *Modern ecclesiastical writers* are overwhelmingly favorable to this doctrine. Let Suarez speak for them all. He says: "As it is impossible for God to falsify, so is it impossible for falsehood to be found in Scripture." [32]

(d) The preceding is corroborated and vigorously enforced by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical "*Providentissimus Deus,*" in which he says: "For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and so far is it from being possible that any error can coexist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and rejects it as absolutely and as necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the Supreme Truth, can utter what is not

31 "*Scripturae divinae, a Spiritu Sancto traditae, non potest falsum subesse.*" (*De Potent.*, qu. IV, a. 1, ad 8um.)

32 "*Sicut impossibile est mentiri Deum, ita est impossibile mendacium in Scriptura reperiri.*" (*De Fide*, disp. V, § III, 8.)

true. This is the ancient and unchanging faith of the Church, solemnly defined in the councils of Florence and of Trent, and finally confirmed and more expressly formulated by the Council of the Vatican. . . . It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings, either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration or make God the author of such error. And so emphatically were all the Fathers and Doctors agreed that the divine writings, as left by the inspired writers, are free from all error, that they labored earnestly to reconcile, etc. . . ."

Though the plenary infallibility of Scripture has never been directly and formally defined as an article of faith, still it follows so logically and so necessarily from the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture, and is so clearly intimated in Scripture, and so emphatically taught by Fathers and Schoolmen and theologians and popes and councils, that to question it seems inconsistent with Catholic faith.[32a]

Fr. Prat writes thus: "If Catholic tradition is not an idle fancy, if the unanimous consent of the Fathers is not a vain conceit, if the constancy and the perpetuity and the universality of a doctrine constitute a rule of faith, it follows that there is no dogma of the Church

[32a] Accordingly, if there be any Catholics who think that the Church can, and ultimately will recede from this position and allow this doctrine to lapse into oblivion, we can only repeat for their benefit the "Ninth Beatitude," which says: "*Beati qui non expectant, quia non disappointabuntur.*"

more solidly established than the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture. No Father, no medieval Schoolman, no ecclesiastical writer, even in the presence of inextricable difficulties, ever had recourse (in order to extricate himself from his embarrassment), to this handy expedient of admitting that there can be in the Bible, errors of any kind whatsoever." [33]

Inspiration and Inerrancy

Many good Christians are deeply concerned to know whether or not the inspired text is really in conflict with truth, as is so often asserted by unbelievers. In answer to this, we repeat what we have already abundantly proved, that Sacred Scripture is inspired in all its parts, and that the necessary and natural consequence of plenary inspiration is plenary infallibility. The logic of it is very short and simple: God is the author of Scripture in all its parts; but God can not be the author of what is not true, of what is not infallibly true. Therefore, Sacred Scripture is infallibly true in all parts.

Still some ask: But are there not *scientific errors?* Are there not *historical errors* in Sacred Scripture? If there are not, then why so much talk about them? And if there are, how can we reconcile their presence with plenary inspiration, and even with plenary infallibility? What is to be done?

Simply this is to be done: The student should learn, as soon as he may, how to reconcile the presence of mere material error in Scripture with the infallibility

[33] *La Bible et l'Histoire*, p. 15.

of God, with the infallibility of the Sacred Writer, and with the inerrancy of the Sacred Books. This need not be so paradoxical as it might seem to be.

The student may rest assured that there *must* be, and there *is* a sense, a real and proper sense of the word, in which all Scripture is true in all its parts.

What is this sense? We answer: Scripture is true in all the parts for which either God or the Sacred Writer is responsible and in the same way in which he is responsible, and to the same extent.

The positive proof of the infallibility of Sacred Scripture, which we have already given, is very easily and validly established.

But the negative proof, which consists in the solution of difficulties and in the refutation of objections, is not so short and easy, the objections being so numerous and so varied and so intricate in character.

One way to answer these objections would be to take up the Bible and prove the inerrancy of every book, every chapter, and every verse individually, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse. Much of this work has been done in commentaries on the text and in special introductions and other works devoted to this special task.

But in a General Introduction, like this, it will be better for our purpose, and much more satisfactory to the student, if we lay down broad general principles, which, if mastered, and when occasion requires, will enable the student to do most of this work for and by himself. We give a few of the most useful.

General Principles

1. As regards the *correct wording* of the text, it is most important to understand, definitely and from the very start, the real state of the question. When we say that the "Sacred Books have God for their author" and that, consequently, they are infallibly true in all their parts, it should be distinctly understood, and should never be forgotten, that we are speaking only of that *first, original, autographic manuscript,* which passed from the hands of the inspired writer under the eyes of the first readers. For that first manuscript, in all its parts, God was responsible. He is also responsible for any copy of that first manuscript, either in the original language or in a translation, as far as, but only so far as, it faithfully represents or reproduces that first manuscript, but no farther.

Therefore, as far as any copy, or any part of any copy, of the Bible has not been faithfully reproduced, either by translation or by transcription, we need not contend that it is infallibly true. This principle, which is always understood, should be more distinctly emphasized than it usually is. We shall see elsewhere how important it is.

2. In explaining passages of Scripture that seem to clash with one another, it is necessary that the student should not mistake passages only *apparently* contradictory for passages *really* contradictory. Of the former there are *many* in Scripture; of the latter there are *none.* A real contradiction is defined as "an affirmation and a negation of the same attribute about

the same subject under the same respect." According to this definition, there is not the slightest resemblance between a *real* contradiction and most of the *so-called* contradictions which the negative critics are so fond of taking for granted without a shred of evidence and without any attempt at proof.

3. There is *no real* contradiction between Scripture and Scripture, that is, no real contradiction between different authentic texts of Scripture, whether written by one or by more than one writer. There may be, and there are, *apparent* contradictions in Scripture; but most of them disappear, as soon as the textual critic has discovered the correct original reading of the text, or as soon as the exegete has interpreted the passage according to proper *hermeneutical principles* and in a sympathetic and common-sense manner.

4. By contradiction between texts we mean a contradiction between the real meaning of texts; and the real meaning of a text is not necessarily the meaning which you or I may choose to put into or foist upon a text, but the meaning which the Sacred Writer has put into it. It is the "*mens auctoris*," *i. e.*, the thought which the author had in his mind at the time of writing and which he wished, by means of his written language, to reproduce in the minds of his readers.

5. Also, there is no real contradiction between the teachings of Scripture (when understood in the sense intended by the Sacred Writer), and any philosophical principle, or scientific conclusion or historical fact, when definitely ascertained. In fewer words, there is no real, but, at most, only an apparent, contradiction

between Scripture on the one hand and any truth of the natural or supernatural order on the other hand.

6. But there may be, and there sometimes is, opposition between the *scripturist* and the *scientist,* and this is likely to happen whenever the one or the other does not know his own business, or when either unduly interferes in the specialty of the other. In such cases, let them fight it out, and may the best man win!

7. So manifestly reasonable is all this that, if we find mistakes *in* Scripture (though not *of* Scripture), we may place the responsibility for them either on pagan persecutors, like Antiochus and Nero, who sought to exterminate Scripture, or on the early editors or revisers, or on the copyists of the original text, or on the translators, or on the printers, or on the printers' devils, or on any one or anything we best can or may, but never on the inspired writer, still less on God; "For God is true and every man is a liar"— "every man"— except the inspired writer, and we except him only so long as he is inspired.

8. Hermeneutics, sanely applied, furnishes many means of explaining away difficulties and apparent mistakes in the sacred text; but, for the present, we confine ourselves to the following rule of St. Augustine, in which he says: If, in Sacred Scripture, you find anything that does not seem to be true, you should not forthwith conclude that the sacred writer made a mistake; but you should say: "*aut codex mendosus, aut interpres erravit, aut tu non intelligis.*" This means: "Either the manuscript was badly copied

out, or the translator did not catch the right idea, or you do not understand."

In this famous passage, Augustine mentions three possible ways of explaining the presence of real or apparent mistakes in Sacred Scripture without making either God or the inspired writer in any way responsible for them. This is done either:

1. By supposing that the manuscript has been badly copied out or incompetently edited or revised; or
2. By supposing that the translator did not catch and did not give the right meaning of the original; or
3. By supposing that the reader does not understand the real sense of the passage in question and sees mistakes where there are none.

In the first two cases the errors are either of (1) *translation* or (2) *transcription*. Such errors, though *in* Scripture, are not *of* Scripture. They are *no part* of the genuine text. They came not from the sacred writer, but from some incompetent translator or careless copyist, centuries, perhaps, after the book was written. Neither God nor the sacred writer is in any way responsible for them.

1. If the mistakes are mistakes of *translation* only, the remedy is simply to correct the translation by a comparison of the version with the original Hebrew or Greek, or to work on the original instead of the translation.

2. If the mistakes are mistakes of *transcription,* it is

the duty of the *textual critic* to detect and to correct the errors, whenever it has been conclusively proved that they formed no part of the original inspired text. But for this, great caution and prudence are needed.

A. Inspiration and Science

The natural sciences, *as such,* are not directly or professedly taught in the Bible. This does not mean that they may not be taught indirectly, by implication or by inference. As instances we might mention the creation of primordial matter out of nothing in the beginning, the unity of the human race, the direct intervention of God in the creation of man, etc. But, as such, they are not directly or professedly taught in Scripture. The reason is manifest.

The Bible is a *religious* book, written for the purpose of teaching men the theoretical truths and the practical duties necessary for salvation. For this, the natural sciences are of little or no avail, and, therefore, the sacred writers make no attempt whatever to teach men the intimate nature or the intrinsic essence of natural objects. Nor could they, had they wished; for they naturally knew as little about such things as did their contemporaries, and there is no reason to suppose, unless in very rare cases, that a knowledge of natural science was ever communicated to them by divine revelation.

There is, therefore, no contradiction and there can be no real contradiction between the teachings of S. Scripture, when properly understood, and the conclusions of science, when definitely ascertained. In fewer

words, there is no opposition between Scripture and science.

The purpose of the Bible is to teach religion, not natural science. Even so, all that the Bible says about science, whether directly or indirectly, is, of course, true, at least relatively. The sacred writers do not use the rigorously exact and technical language of the modern scientist, when he endeavors to explain the true inwardness of the physical world. They are content to describe the phenomena of nature or the outward appearance of things and, in describing them, they use the easier and more popular language of their time and of all times.

They spoke to be understood by their own immediate generation and by all subsequent generations. But they would not have been understood for 2000 or for 3000 years if they had used the technical, scientific language of the 20th century of the Christian era. Let us explain.

A physical object has two sides to it, an inside and an outside.

1. The *inside* is examined by the scientists; that is their specialty. They peer into it; they kodak it; they ex-ray it; they discuss it; they wrangle over it; they theorize about it in learned language, and settle it as best they can. And, if they cannot settle it, then the theories follow one another in quick succession to the scrap heap and their peculiar language goes along with them.

2. On the contrary, the *outside* of things, the external appearance of natural objects is observed by the

great world at large. But, the outside appearance of things is always the same; so, too, is the language in which it is described. Therefore, as long as the world lasts, it will always appear that it is the earth that stands still and that the sun revolves around the earth and rises and sets every twenty-four hours. And, though they know better, still the world at large, including even astronomers, will continue to say so and will say so in the popular language of the past, present and future, the only language that the sacred writers could have or should have used, if they wanted to be understood by their own and by all future generations.

However, while all things in S. Scripture are true, not all things are true in precisely the same way and to the same extent. This principle was recognized even in the early ages of the Church. St. Augustine, who died A. D. 430, speaking on this subject, says: "The Holy Ghost, who spoke through them [the sacred writers], did not intend to teach men those things which were in no way useful to salvation." [34]

The same ideas prevailed in the *Middle Ages.* St. Thomas Aquinas, who died A. D. 1272, writes thus: "Moses spoke to a rude people; and so, adapting himself to their ignorance, he spoke to them of those things only which appeared to the senses." [35]

In *our own day,* Leo XIII, in his encyclical "On the Study of the Scriptures," is still more explicit and more emphatic. He says: "We must remember that

[34] *De Genesi ad Litteram,* l, II, c. 9.
[35] *Summa Theol.,* Ia, qu. XLI.

'the sacred writers . . . did not intend to teach men these things [that is to say, the essential nature of the things of the visible universe],— things which are in no way profitable to salvation.' Hence they [the sacred writers] did not seek to penetrate the secrets of nature, but rather described and dealt with things in more or less figurative language, or in terms which were commonly used at that time and which, in many instances, are in daily use at this day, even by the most eminent men of science. Ordinary speech primarily and properly describes what comes under the senses; and, somewhat in the same way, the sacred writers went by what sensibly appeared, or put down what God, speaking to men, signified in a way which men could understand and to which they were accustomed."

Therefore, from the very explicit language of these great doctors and of the Supreme Pontiff, it is quite manifest that the sacred writer describes natural phenomena merely from the standpoint of the beholder or onlooker, without examining into their intrinsic nature. The writer describes such things, just as they appeared to him, and just as they appear to all men at all times. He describes the external appearance and not the internal nature of such objects. The appearance is always the same; so, too, the description of it is always the same and always true for all times and places and persons. It is usual to say that the language of Scripture, in describing natural phenomena, is not absolutely, but only relatively true.

B. Inspiration and History

The foregoing considerations show conclusively that Scripture, when properly interpreted, is not opposed to natural science, when definitely ascertained. But what about *history?* Is there not an irreconcilable conflict between Scripture and history? Is it not true that, in Scripture, there are many books historical in appearance, but not historical in reality? Do not some of these books, at least in appearance, contradict the official records of neighboring nations, such as Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria? Then how are we to reconcile such contradictions between the Bible and history?

Apropos of this subject we ask and answer the following questions:

1. May we apply to Bible history, in general, all the principles which, as seen in the preceding section, are applicable to the natural sciences?

2. May we say, as we said of the natural sciences, that history, as such, is not directly and professedly taught in the Bible?

3. Or may we admit that all Bible narratives describe, in popular language, only the appearance and *not the reality* of history?

4. Or may we admit that all Bible narratives are not absolutely, but only relatively, true?

These questions are expressed in such broad and general terms that, as here proposed, they must all be answered in the negative. However, a few distinctions will help to clear them up.

1. As to the first question, a few Catholics hold that,

in the historical no less than in the scientific parts of Scripture, we find the popular mode of speaking according to the appearances of things, *i. e.,* according to the phenomena. In this case, by historical appearances, they mean the popular traditions or the pre-existing historical documents that have been incorporated into the sacred text.

The theory that the sacred books were *generally* written according to historical appearances, as just explained, would be an easy means of explaining away all the difficulties raised against Sacred Scripture in the name of history; because it would place the responsibility for error, if there were any, not on the sacred writer, but on the written documents or on the other sources from which he drew his information.

In support of their opinion, they quote the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII "On the Study of Scripture," where, after speaking of things pertaining to the natural sciences, he says: "The sacred writers often went by what appeared to the senses"; he then adds, "The principles here laid down will apply to cognate sciences and especially to history."

In reply to this very extreme opinion, some Catholics maintain that these words of Leo's encyclical are applicable also to Bible history, only *not so universally* as to the natural sciences. They apply, say they, not, of course, to all, but only to those special parts of Bible history "which," like *all* the natural sciences, "are in no way profitable to salvation." "God did not intend to teach men those things" (certain narrative parts of the Bible), "which were in no way profitable

to salvation." In those parts, "the sacred writers did not seek to penetrate the secrets" of remote history, "but went by what appeared to the senses." The facts mentioned had long since disappeared and all that remained of them, their "visible appearances," were found in ancient historical documents and in popular oral traditions. The sacred writers found them both instructive and edifying. So they went by them,—for what they were worth, and "did not seek to verify them," and, perhaps, could not, had they wished. In such a frame of mind, they could not and did not make themselves responsible for all their statements nor for any one of the errors which they may have contained.

But this second sentence is separated from the first by the space of nearly two printed octave pages and on a different topic, thus making it quite evident that the second sentence should be referred, not to the remote paragraph mentioned above, but only to the immediately preceding context.

Now, in that long interval of two pages, there is not so much as one word about interpreting Bible history according to appearances, but only against transgressing the proper limits of one another's specialty and against teaching error instead of truth. The substance, then, of the intervening paragraph may be summarized thus: What we say against false natural science may be said also against false profane history. Therefore, the appeal to the encyclical is useless.

A serious objection to this theory is that it is stated as a general principle, as a universal proposition, as a broad, sweeping statement, and is made without the

distinctions, restrictions, limitations, and explanations necessary to exclude errors without number in the practical application of it. The decree of the Biblical Commission, as given later, might, perhaps, apply here as there, when it says that such general principles or broad statements are inadmissible "until after it has been positively proved by solid arguments that the sacred writer had intended to do" thus and so.

2. The second question is this: May we say, as we said of the natural sciences, that history, as such, is not directly and professedly taught in the Bible?

In answer to this question we say that, if one thing is more certain than another, it is that the Bible contains accounts, not merely of apparent, but of *real* and *true* history. While the natural sciences, such as chemistry, mathematics, mechanics, as such, have little or nothing to do with revealed religion or with the salvation of souls, we must surely acknowledge that history is an *essential part* of religion, and that history and doctrine in the Bible are sometimes so intimately blended together as to be inseparable and even indistinguishable. In such cases, it is not merely an abstract, theoretical truth, but it is the concrete, historical fact itself, that is the dogma. For instance, to say that "the Word became flesh" is both a dogma of faith and a fact of history. The dogma is a fact and the fact is a dogma; they are identical. Other instances are the Incarnation, the life, death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the institution of the Church, of the Primacy of Peter, etc., etc. These and many other facts of history have been directly and

divinely revealed by God to the Church and are an integral part of the original deposit of faith. The same cannot be said of any scientific law or principle. Of this there can be no doubt.

Besides, most of the books of the Bible are manifestly historical in character and contents, and are known and classified as "The Historical Books" of the Old and New Testaments. In fact, the Christian religion, unlike most other religions, is based, not on chemistry, physics, geology or astronomy, but precisely on history, and this is its glory. In the Apostles' Creed we say: "I believe in Jesus Christ, . . . who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried,"— all of which are unquestionably historical facts.

However, to enter further into our subject, we may say that inspiration is compatible with every legitimate variety of literature, with prose and poetry, with parables and allegories, with modern critical history and, what is more *ad rem,* with ancient popular history. Neither does inspiration change or modify the laws by which the several legitimate varieties of literature are discriminated, classified, and regulated.

Accordingly, it would be a great mistake to maintain that inspiration imposes a strictly historical character on all kinds of literature, whether prose or poetry, or that it reduces them all to the one dead level of rigorously critical modern history. An inspired book is historical only when the author wishes to make it historical and, even then, it is more or less historical, according as the author wishes to make it more or

less historical, *provided always he take the precaution to make his intention properly understood by his readers.*

It is, therefore, sufficient if the sacred writer gives to his work that degree or amount of historical truth which harmonizes with the variety of literature that was considered legitimate in his day and which, therefore, he had a right to select for his work without waiting 2000 or 3000 years for the approval of the XXth century critic.

Further, it is very important to understand precisely what is meant by saying that the Bible is essentially a *religious book.* For, in a religious book the historical element is naturally subordinate to the religious element and exists chiefly for the sake of the religious purpose of the book. From this it follows that, in the abstract, there need be no more history in the Bible than is necessary as a foundation for religion to rest upon, or as a means of illustrating either doctrinal principles or moral lessons. This explains how it is that Bible history is not continuous, is not complete, is not critical, is not modern; but is interrupted and fragmentary and popular, and (written after the fashion of the ancients), is often freer and less artificial than modern history, but yet, is perfectly true.

Throughout this whole discussion, we take it for granted that a narrator, whether inspired or profane, without uttering one word of falsehood and without danger of deceiving anyone, may relate things that never took place. This may happen in two ways, *viz.:*

1. Whenever the narrator himself, either explicitly

or implicitly, assures us that he merely relates what *he got from others,* and that *he does not intend to make himself responsible* for the contents of the quotation. But of this we shall speak more fully when discussing quotations in Scripture.

2. Whenever the narrator himself, either explicitly or implicitly, gives us to understand that he relates fictitious events *under the guise of history,* either to please the reader or to describe more graphically, or to inculcate more forcibly, some religious truth or some moral lesson. For instance, no one deceives and no one is deceived by parables, legends, fables, novels, romances, because every one knows that they are what they are.

But we are not now considering books that contain quotations or are professedly fictitious, but only books that are supposed to be seriously historical, such as the Pentateuch, Josue, Judges, Kings, the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles.

3. The third question, then, is this: May we admit that, in the historical parts of the Bible, the sacred writer relates, not real, but only apparent history? Not *facta facta,* but *facta ficta?*

In describing *physical* objects, which fall under the senses, the Bible does not intend to teach any man what he does not already know and what he does not witness every day of his life, *e. g.,* that the sun rises and sets every twenty-four hours. Therefore, no one is, or can be, deceived, so long as such natural objects are described in the usual popular language and according to their outward appearances.

But, in Bible history, the case is quite different, because here we consider facts which took place thousands of years ago, facts witnessed by but few persons, and known to others, if known at all, only on the testimony of those first witnesses transmitted to us in the Bible. It is evident, therefore, that the Good Book intends to teach us those things and to teach them as so many truths. Therefore, unless the account of such events, as found in the Bible, is conformable with the facts in the case, not knowledge, but error would be the result.

Without any one telling us, we know that the sun rises and sets every twenty-four hours; that is in the very nature of things and cannot now be changed. But, unless informed by some competent witness, we could never know, for instance, whether David killed Goliath or Goliath killed David; for there is nothing in the nature of the case to tell us which necessarily killed the other, though the chances favored Goliath.

The natural sciences are of little or no avail to religion; for, whether the sun revolves around the earth, or the earth around the sun, or each around the other, or both around something else, does not help a man to reach Heaven. But whether Christ lived and died, as related in the Gospels, is of prime importance to all men. The Christian religion differs from most other religions by the fact that it is built on a historical foundation and, if that is false, all is lost. Therefore, while our faith does not depend on the natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, *it does most manifestly depend on history.*

The importance of Bible history is again manifest from the fact that God, though He never taught the natural sciences, has yet taught many historical facts, even by direct, divine revelation, and imposed on men the obligation to accept them as true at the risk of eternal loss.

There is, then, no parity in this matter between science and history and, therefore, Bible history is in general *real* and not *merely apparent*. This holds at least in general, and until the reader, in some way, is warned by the sacred writer to expect the contrary.

However, admitting that all this is true, at least as a general rule, still we may ask: Is it not possible, at least in the abstract and in some very rare cases, to find in an inspired book narratives that are historical only in appearance, but not historical in reality, such as parables, allegories and popular traditions, based on real history, but embellished with fiction?

The Biblical Commission, in a decree dated June 23rd, 1905, acknowledges, in just so many words, that such narratives may *possibly* be found in Scripture, but, at the same time, warns us that we should proceed with great caution in the matter, and that we should not admit that such narratives actually exist in Scripture, until after we have proved by solid arguments that, in such passages, the sacred writer did not have the intention of writing real history, and that we should be ever ready to accept the judgment of the Church, the only authentic interpreter in all doctrinal matters.

The question was thus proposed:

"As a principle of right exegesis, may we admit the

opinion which holds that those books of Scripture which, in whole or in part, are considered historical, do not always narrate objectively true and properly so-called history, but have only the appearance of history (and are written) to signify something foreign to the proper literal or historical sense of the words?"

The answer was: Negatively; except, however, the case, neither easily nor rashly to be admitted, in which, the sense of the Church not opposing, and her judgment safeguarded, it is proved by *solid arguments* that the *sacred writer did not wish* to transmit true and properly so-called history, but, under the form and appearance of history, to give a parable or allegory, or some meaning other than the proper literal or historical sense of the word."

We give the Latin text below:

DUBIUM

"Utrum admitti possit tamquam principium rectae exegeseos sententia, quae tenet Sacrae Scripturae libros, qui pro historicis habentur, sive totaliter sive ex parte, non historiam proprie dictam et objective veram quandoque narrare, sed speciem tantum historiae prae se ferre ad aliquid significandum a proprie litterali seu historica verborum significatione alienum?"

RESPONSUM

"Negative, excepto tamen casu, non facile nec temere admittendo, in quo, ecclesiae sensu non refragante, eiusque salvo iudicio, solidis argumentis probe-

tur hagiographum voluisse non veram et proprie dictam historiam tradere, sed sub specie et forma historiae, parabolam, allegoriam, vel sensum aliquem a proprie litterali seu historica verborum significatione remotum proponere."

4. There still remains a fourth question, somewhat similar to the preceding. Maintaining, as we do, that, from the very nature of the case, Bible history can seldom be interpreted according to appearances, still, may we not, in some real sense of the word, admit that sacred history in general is not absolutely, but only relatively, true? Is not God alone absolutely true? And are not all created things only relatively true? The question supposes that there are two kinds of truth, (1) absolute, and (2) relative.

In reply we say that the words "absolute" and "relative" are used in a great variety of meanings and are often ambiguous. We readily admit that absolute truth, in the fullest and highest sense of the word, is said of God only, because He alone is perfectly independent of all else and, compared with the Creator, compared with the absolute One, compared with the absolutely absolute One, all created things (including even the Bible) are only relatively true.

Still, in a way, some created things may be, and often are, called absolutely true; that is, when they are conformable with the objective reality of things and when in no way conditioned, limited, or qualified. This holds of mathematical axioms, of metaphysical propositions, of certain physical laws and historical facts, or statements of facts, when true without dis-

tinction, reservation, or limitation. Thus it is absolutely true that twice two is four, that the whole is greater than any of its parts, that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, that God made the world, that the sun is a source of light and heat, that the Apostle Paul once existed. Yet none of these things are so absolutely true as it is that God exists.

However, besides the above mentioned things, which are absolutely true, there are many other things, or statements of things, that are only relatively true, that is, are really true, but in a lesser degree. Thus, when we say that these things are true, we do not mean that they are true in the same high, full, transcendental sense in which God alone is true; we do not mean that they are true to the utmost limit of truth, or in every imaginable way, shape, and manner, and to every conceivable extent. We simply mean that, in spite of their limitations, they teach no formal error and there is no positive contradiction in them, between what *is* and what *is said*, or between the statement and the objective reality of the thing stated.

General statements regarding such things are true, but only under certain conditions and with the restrictions or limitations necessary to explain their meaning. Therefore they are often variously said to be either substantially, or practically, or approximately, or comparatively, or relatively true, or true sufficiently for the purpose of the writer; true, when properly explained in the sense and according to the mind of the author; true, when interpreted benevolently and sym-

pathetically and when understood by the reader, as the writer intended them to be understood, that is, in a practical and common-sense manner.

It is difficult for scholars to find some one word with which to designate accurately and adequately this second category of truths. In the absence of a proper qualifying adjective, some of our writers object strenuously to the use of the word "relative" to describe such truths; because this word is used in such an absurd sense by many Rationalists and might easily be misunderstood.

German Pantheists and French eclectics expressly maintain that we may approach, but can never attain, absolute truth. They tell us that whatever we know or think we know, is suited to the age in which each of us lives, and is always changing so as to adapt itself to our environment; in other words, it is true relatively to the circumstances of time, place and person. Thus, what is now true, will yet be false in a more or less distant future. Also, at one and the same time, what is true in one place, may be and often is false in another place. And what is true to one generation, may be and often is false to another generation.

If all this be as stated, then this Rationalistic theory of relative and changeable truth will itself also, in due time, become false.

Because this theory leads so directly and by so short a cut to universal scepticism, as well as for other reasons, many of our writers avoid the term "relative" in discussing the second category of truths, above mentioned, lest the word be misunderstood in this absurd

Rationalistic sense. However, Pesch seems to use the word without much scruple, perhaps, because he has sufficiently explained it; Fr. Prat thinks it advisable to avoid the word; while Dr. Egger and many others are, under the circumstances, strenuously opposed to its use.

Substantially true are the usual descriptions of the phenomena or appearances of natural objects, such as the rising and the setting of the sun every day. But such things we have already considered sufficiently for our purpose.

Practically true is an exposition of doctrine which does not contain all the truths of revealed religion, still less all the truths of the natural order, of the natural ethical law. All Catholics will readily admit this, because the Church teaches that divine ecclesiastical tradition contains many truths of revealed religion not found in the Bible.

Substantially true is a narrative in which not the whole, but only a part of what happened is related, but yet enough for the purpose. Thus, Scripture is practically true, though it does not relate all the historical facts known to the Sacred Writers.[36] Out of the abundance of materials at their disposal they often felt compelled to select what best suited their purpose. As to what they omitted: *"Qui tacet, nihil dicit."*

Substantially true is a narrative in which things are related indefinitely, as is often done in ordinary conversation when elaborate accuracy is not desirable. Thus, Scripture often uses vague language, general terms, round numbers, and other elastic expressions;

[36] John 21, 25.

e. g., "eight or ten days," "In those days," "About three thousand."

Life would be too short if, every time we mentioned facts of the past, we were obliged to tell precisely how many centuries, years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds ago each event had happened.

Substantially true is a narrative in which are lacking the explanations, distinctions, restrictions, or additions which, if mentioned, would make the narrative true absolutely and in every sense of the word. Such qualifications are omitted either because the writer did not know them, or because the reader is supposed not to care for them.

Practically true are fictitious narratives when the sacred writer did not intend by them to teach real, objective facts, but under the guise of history, intended to inculcate some religious truth or some moral lesson. Such are allegories and the parables in the Gospels.

Practically true are narratives in which the sacred writer relates only what he found in popular traditions or in preëxisting documents, but without always adopting them as his own and without making himself responsible for their statements.

Practically true are 'narratives that were written according to the manner of writing popular traditional history, that commonly prevailed and that was generally considered (and really was) perfectly proper and legitimate in those olden times.

The sacred writers *per se* intended principally the substance of the facts and cared less for the material

words, provided they conveyed their meaning with substantial accuracy. But the question, What belongs to the substance *per se* intended? cannot easily be determined by the rules of modern grammar and rhetoric, but only by the various literary usages and established customs of past ages. It is often difficult to make this distinction accurately. In any case, however, the *onus probandi* rests on the critic, or exegete, "to prove positively by solid arguments" that such and such details are indifferent to the principal scope of the work and were taken over bodily by the sacred writer from older documents composed according to the approved customs of his age and people. But one thing is certain: in none of the foregoing cases does the sacred writer positively teach any formal error.

This manner of composing historical books is somewhat analogous to the popular mode of speaking of physical things, so far as each speaks according to established usage. But there is this difference, that the physical phenomena are something objective, whereas the literary usages are rather subjective and more likely to mislead than the others. In any case, he who speaks thus, follows a legitimate and well recognized custom, and deceives no one, least of all the men of his own generation.

Dr. Poels writes in substance: "It is a foregone conclusion that the Catholic doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible allows no compromise whatsoever. On this point a Catholic ought to be always very explicit. It is impossible to admit a single error in the sacred

writings, without either perverting the Catholic notion of inspiration or making God Himself the author of error." The whole Bible is inspired, in all its parts, in all its sentences, and even in its *obiter dicta.* Every affirmation of the Bible is unfailingly true. "But every sentence of the Bible, of course, must needs be true only in that sense in which God and the inspired author wish it to be understood. It stands to reason, furthermore, that an author, in order to make himself understood, must observe the rules of human speech and literary custom. And if he does and if, nevertheless, readers misunderstand the true sense, the readers themselves, and not the author, are responsible for the error. In such a case there is no error in the writings [of the author], but only in the mind of the reader. In order to set forth the true sense intended and expressed by the sacred writer, it is not sufficient merely to examine the words and the grammatical construction of single sentences; we must also consider the context, not only the immediate context, but also the more remote context, that is to say, the literary character of the whole passage or even of the whole book.

"What we ought to know, first of all, is the *mens auctoris,* the intention of the writer. Now that he is dead and gone, the only way to discover what he meant is to examine his book. The presumption is that his book was written according to the literary custom that prevailed in his day. Then, the first thing to do is to determine the *genre* or literary character of his work, whether it is prose or poetry, and what kind of

prose or poetry. The very same words may have a very different meaning when found in fiction or in a strictly historical book.

"In some cases the author himself tells us explicitly to what class of literature his book, or parts of his book, belong. For instance, 'Jesus spoke unto them this *parable*.' If it was a parable, then it was not history. There are cases in which the literary character of the book is quite evident, but there are other cases in which it is difficult to decide. As the question is not theological, but merely literary, it is not for the theologian, but for the sober-minded Catholic critic, or for the judicious Catholic exegete to determine the question."

C. Inspiration and Quotations

There are in Scripture many quotations borrowed from inspired sources, such as the Lord's Prayer, the "Hail Mary" by Saint Elizabeth, the "Magnificat" by the Blessed Virgin Mary, the "*Nunc Dimittis*" by the aged Simeon, the "*Benedictus*" by Zachary, and the four Gospels, which consist almost entirely of quotations from the discourses of Our Lord. But of these we have no occasion to speak now.

There are also in Scripture many other quotations borrowed by the sacred writers from non-inspired sources. As originally written or spoken, these passages were not inspired. However, the sacred writer was inspired to quote them and in this sense they are now inspired.

We know that Scripture often relates the deeds or

quotes the words of non-inspired men, but sometimes does so only narratively and without making itself responsible either for the deeds related, which may be either good or bad, or for the words quoted, which may be either true or false.

All this is to be expected, because in Scripture there is a very obvious distinction between (1) what is positively taught or inculcated as a matter of *instruction,* and (2) what is merely talked about or only mentioned as a topic of *conversation* and then dropped and left as it was found.

This explains how it is that Scripture sometimes mentions not only things human, but also things inhuman and even diabolical in character, including the most barefaced lies and the most shameful crimes, and the most revolting and degrading forms of idolatry; all of which may be mentioned in Scripture, but mentioned only to be condemned and reprobated,—all of which may be related, related faithfully and just as they happened, but related only to be rejected and repudiated.

This explanation is so manifestly reasonable that it is surprising how often it has been overlooked and forgotten. Yet, it is the most natural thing that can well be imagined. The Bible, which is largely a historical book, represents men, good and bad, and angels, white and black, and even Satan himself, as thinking and speaking and acting, each according to the laws of his nature, each as he must or as he chooses to act, whether good or bad.

The Gospel relates the deeds or quotes the words,

for instance, of the Epicurean, or of the Scribe, or or the Pharisee, or of the Sadducee, or of Herod, or of Pilate, or of the man born blind, or of the mob,—whether the deeds be good or bad, and whether the words be true or false. It relates them truthfully and just as they happened. It gives a faithful written record of the things said or done, but gives them for what they are worth. It records them as the sayings or as the doings, or as the opinions of those to whom they are ascribed, but not as the sayings, or as the doings, or as the opinions of the inspired writer; still less as those of God; unless, of course, it is stated or implied that He approved them or adopted them, or in some way made them his own.

A few instances will suffice to make this clear.

1. In the Psalms we read: "The fool saith in his heart, 'There is no God.'" It is false to say, "There is no God"; but it is true to say that some fool said so. It took a fool to say it.

2. We read in I Kings 13, 1: "Saul was a child of one year when he began to reign, and he reigned two years over Israel."

We may take it for granted that the sacred writer (sensible man that he was, as every chapter in this book will show) never wrote that passage just as it now stands; all the more so as he had already written to the contrary in I Kings 10, 23, where he says that Saul "was taller than any of the people from the shoulders and upward," and this was said at a time before Saul was chosen King of Israel. It is conjectured that two numerals, perhaps twenty or forty, by some mis-

hap, fell out of the ranks on their long march down through the ages and disappeared. Subsequent Hebrew copyists, feeling that something had gone wrong, but not knowing just what, nor how to remedy it, continued most scrupulously to reproduce the text just as they found it. The sacred writer wrote the truth and is in no way responsible for what happened to his book hundreds of years, perhaps, after he was dead and gone.

3. There is a contradiction also between the two accounts of the death of Saul, but the contradiction is not in the words of the inspired writer. In II Kings 1, 10, we read: "So, standing over him [Saul], I killed him." This is a quotation from the words of a non-inspired Amalecite, who, hoping to receive a reward for it, boasted falsely that he had killed Saul, while fleeing from the field of battle. In I Kings 31, 4, we read: "Then Saul took his sword and fell upon it. . . . Thus died Saul." In this last passage we have the words of the *inspired writer himself,* who gives the true account of the affair. A very superficial glance at the two narratives will show that this is the true solution of the difficulty.

Value of Quotations in Scripture

In order to know for certain what authority to ascribe to quotations in Scripture, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between two kinds of quotations in general.

1. The first is the truth of the citation as a citation. It is the "*veritas citationis,*" which, for want of a

better name, is often called "historical truth." It is the substantial conformity of the citation with its source; or it is the agreement of the quotation with the document quoted.

2. The second is the truth of the *thing said* or *cited.* It is the "*veritas rei citatae,*" which is often called "objective truth." It is the agreement of the contents of the quotation with the facts in the case.

In some cases there is a great difference between the historical truth and the objective truth in Scripture.

A quotation is historically true, if it is a historical fact that such persons said such things and under such circumstances, even though the things said may be false. St. Augustine, as usual with him, expresses this idea very tersely: "It is true that such things were said, but the things said are not true."

Quotations in Scripture are always historically true, *if* such was the intention of the writer.

The sacred writer is responsible for the *historical truth* of his quotations, but not for their *objective falsity;* for, whoever professedly quotes another, is responsible for at least the substantial conformity of his quotation with the original, which he pretends to quote; he is responsible for the accuracy with which the original document is reproduced; but he is not responsible for the ideas, for the thoughts, for the sentiments expressed in the original and carried over into the quotation; in other words, he is not responsible for the *contents* of the quotation, whether good or

bad, whether true or false, *unless* he approves and makes them his own.

A quotation is *objectively* true, if its contents are true, if the thoughts or ideas in it are true in themselves; otherwise it is false, no matter how accurately it is reproduced or copied out.

Quotations Either Explicit or Implicit

If the sacred writer acknowledges that he quotes, or if he mentions the source from which he quotes, the quotation is *explicit* or *express,* otherwise it is *tacit* or *implicit.*

Approval or Disapproval of Quotations

Sometimes the sacred writer approves the contents of the quotation, sometimes he condemns it, and sometimes he does neither, but leaves it to the intelligent reader to ascertain and decide for himself whether to approve, or to condemn, or to suspend judgment in the matter. Also sometimes he approves or disapproves either in express terms or equivalently. Instances:

Jeremias both explicitly quotes and explicitly condemns a false prophesy in the following words: "Jeremias said to Hananias: . . . 'Thou hast made this people to trust in a lie. . . . This year shalt thou die' . . . and he died in that year." [37]

St. Paul both explicitly quotes and explicitly approves a fragment of a Greek poem in these words:

[37] Jer. 28, 15–17.

" One of them, a prophet of their own, said, ' The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slothful bellies.' This testimony is true." [38]

Nehemias explicitly quotes a passage from an old record relating what had happened, long before his time, to the first exiles on their return from Babylon to Jerusalem, and neither approves nor disapproves of its statements.[39]

Sacred Scripture contains countless citations, some from inspired and some from non-inspired sources; some are explicit and some implicit; some are approved by the sacred writer and some are condemned, while others are neither approved nor condemned.

The sacred writer always reproduces the quotation with substantial accuracy, if he professes to do so. The contents of a quotation are always true, if either explicitly or implicitly approved by the writer. They are false, if he condemns them either expressly or tacitly.

In the absence of any word of approval or disapproval, it is not always easy to know for certain, whether the sacred writer assumes responsibility for the contents of quotations, unless he says so, either in so many words or equivalently.

This is true especially of *explicit* quotations, for the mere fact of mentioning the source from which he derived them, seems to betray a desire on the part of the sacred writer to shirk the responsibility for the contents of the quotations and to let it rest on the author quoted.

38 Titus 1, 12 sq. 39 Nehemias (2 Esdras), 7, 5–70.

On the other hand, in *implicit* quotations, the sacred writer seems more ready to assume the responsibility. However, each concrete case must be decided on its individual merits.

Nor is it always easy to recognize implicit quotations; that is, to know for certain whether a given passage is really borrowed from some other source or not. The burden of proof rests on the critic or exegete to show positively that the passage is quoted and that the sacred writer did not approve it, nor make it his own, before the presence of error in it can be admitted. Such important matters should not be taken for granted gratuitously, but "should be proved by solid arguments."

Some Catholic exegetes think that they can get rid of most difficulties in Scripture by supposing that the passages in which they occur are *implicit quotations,* approved in general, but not in detail, by the sacred writer and that, consequently, he is not answerable for the slight errors which they may contain. In such cases they suppose the sacred writer was sufficiently familiar with the history of the period about which he writes, to hold himself responsible for the general drift, but not for the minute details of the documents which he, therefore, incorporated bodily into his book, leaving it to the reader to verify or not the details of the narrative.

The sacred writer, they say, was most desirous to reproduce the original document just as he found it. Careful to secure the *veritas citationis,* he leaves the

"*veritas rei citatae*" to take care of itself as to the details of the narrative.

Recourse to implicit quotations may be admissible, whenever there is no other way to solve the difficulty, but it should not be abused.

But there are other and sometimes better ways of satisfactorily explaining away many such difficulties. For instance, numbers and proper names of persons and places are often copied out incorrectly because of the difficulty of reading them. In names and numbers, the Hebrew text often differs both from the Greek Septuagint and from the other ancient versions; nor is it always easy to decide which has been most carefully copied out. We may, therefore, reasonably suppose that, had we the autographic copy, there would be no difficulties to solve. Therefore, we may sometimes solve a difficulty by supposing an implicit quotation for the contents of which in detail the sacred writer does not hold himself responsible. Sometimes also we may solve a difficulty by supposing an error in the translation, but neither supposition is to be admitted in practice without "good and solid reasons."

The solution of difficulties in Scripture may depend on many circumstances and may be different in each case. In Genesis 46, 21 it is said that Benjamin had ten sons, whose names are there given in full. In I Paralipomenon 8, 2–3 it is said that Benjamin had three sons, from which we are left to infer that the other seven mentioned in the previous list were grandsons or great-grandsons, as there stated. This is easily admitted, for by a well-known Hebrew idiom all direct

male descendants may be, and often are, called sons. An instance: Christ, Our Lord, is called the Son of David, and of Abraham, and of Adam, who lived, the one a thousand years, the other two thousand, and the third many thousands of years before His birth.

The conclusion is that the exegete should not be too ready, ever and always, to take it for granted that the presence of implicit quotations is the only correct explanation of all the difficulties found in Sacred Scripture. In each and every case the presence of implicit quotations must be *proved by solid arguments.* This is the meaning of the decision of the Biblical Commission, issued February 13, 1905. The question is thus asked:

"In order to solve the difficulties that occur in certain Bible passages, which seem to refer to historical facts, may the Catholic exegete say that there is question in such passages of an implicit quotation from a document written by an uninspired author, not all of whose statements were approved or adopted as his own by the Sacred Writer?" The reply was: "Negatively; except in the case in which, safeguarding the sense and the judgment of the Church, it is *proved by solid arguments,* (1) That the sacred writer does really cite the sayings or the writings of another, and (2) That the Sacred Writer neither approves them nor adopts them as his own, nor in any way makes himself responsible for them." [40]

40 DUBIUM: *"Utrum ad enodandas difficultates, quae occurrunt in nonnullis sacrae Scripturae textibus, qui facta historica referre videntur, liceat exegetae Catholico asserere agi in his de citatione tacita vel implicita docu-*

Therefore, it is not repugnant to the plenary real inspiration of the Bible to admit that errors or falsehoods may be found, contained, mentioned in the language of non-inspired persons quoted in Scripture, but without approval. In Scripture the contents of such quotations are never approved. If, as sometimes happens, they are not then and there condemned, it is perhaps because the sacred writers wish to compliment the reader by taking it for granted that he is wise enough and good enough to repudiate them himself, without the writer's doing it for him.

In this whole topic, the important thing is to hold that no falsehood and no error, whether theoretical or practical, whether philosophical or theological, whether scientific or historical, or of whatsoever nature, is ever taught or approved by the sacred writers.

D. False Theories of Inspiration

1. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with the subsequent approbation given by the Holy Ghost or by the Church to a purely human book.

2. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with mere negative divine assistance.

3. Divine Inspiration has been falsely identified with the theory of partial inspiration.

menti ab auctore non inspirato conscripti, cuius asserta omnia auctor inspiratus minime approbare aut sua facere intendit, quaeque ideo ab errore immunia haberi non possunt?"

Responsum: *"Negative, excepto casu, in quo, salvis sensu ac iudicio ecclesiae, solidis argumentis probetur, (1) Hagiographum alterius dicta vel documenta revera citare; (2) eadem nec probare nec sua facere, ita ut iure censeatur non proprio nomine loqui."*

4. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with divine revelation.

5. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with the theory of mechanical inspiration.

6. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with the theory of verbal dictation.

7. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with mere natural illumination, or intuition, or universal Christian inspiration, or the elevation of natural faculties, &c., &c., &c.

8. Divine inspiration has been falsely identified with the theory of mere natural inspiration.

We will explain these theories in order.

I. SUBSEQUENT APPROBATION

Divine inspiration has been identified by some Catholics with the "subsequent approbation" which, as they suppose, could have been given by the Holy Ghost or by the Church to works of exclusively human origin.

If such books, they said, were written entirely "*ex humana industria,*" that is by purely natural resources and without any supernatural assistance whatsoever, and if they are positively approved by the Holy Ghost as exempt from all error, they thereby become a part of inspired Scripture.

Sixtus of Sienna, Lessius, and Bonfrerius, with various shades of difference, held that this mode of inspiration was not a *fact,* but only a *possibility.* Haneberg went further and applied the theory, as a fact, to the historical books of Scripture and taught that

the insertion of such books into the canon by the Church would make them sacred Scripture. He afterwards retracted his error.

This theory, which is manifestly false, has been condemned by the decree of the Council of Trent, in which the word *"conscripti"* shows that Scripture was not written by mere human effort to the exclusion of God. There are two authors of Scripture, God and man.

This theory has also been condemned by the Council of the Vatican in these words: *"Eos vero [libros] Ecclesia pro sacris et canonicis habet; non ideo quod sola humana industria concinnati, sua deinde auctoritate sint approbati . . . sed propterea quod Spiritu Sancto inspirante conscripti, Deum habent auctorem."* [41]

It is well to notice that this decree does not expressly condemn the opinion that such books would become sacred Scripture on the subsequent approbation of the Holy Ghost, but only that they would not become Scripture on the subsequent approbation of the Church. The difference is practically not important.

This theory is opposed also to the teaching of Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical "On the Study of Sacred Scripture." Therefore, there are no such books actually in the canon of Scripture. Subsequent approbation is a misnomer, a contradiction in terms. Inspiration is both antecedent and concomitant, but never subsequent. Inspiration *"inter scribendum"* is simultaneous or synchronous with the act of writing. It

[41] Sess. 3, Cap. 2, Constitutio Dogmatica "De Fide."

produces the book. It is the cause of which the book is the effect. It is of such a nature as to make God the author, *et quidem,* the *principal author,* of the book. But, in the above hypothesis *man alone* would be the author of the book and, if that were once true, it would always be true; it would be true forever; for "*factum infectum fieri nequit.*" It would be too late for God to become the author; and to be the author is the meaning of inspiration.

It is well to remark that subsequent approbation, as above described, would make no change in the *book, but* would make a change in *us;* it would change our attitude towards the book. It would make us certain, with the certainty of faith, that the book is infallibly true, but not that it is inspired. Therefore, not a divine subsequent approbation, but a divine concomitant act or divine origin makes books sacred and inspired.

2. NEGATIVE DIVINE ASSISTANCE

Some Catholic writers have confounded Biblical inspiration with mere negative divine assistance; that is, with just as little assistance as is necessary to preserve the writer from error, and no more.

According to this theory, God did not urge the writers to write; nor did he suggest, even in the remotest way, either the topics to be handled or the manner of handling them; but simply stood by idle and let them write whatsoever they pleased, and would have intervened solely for the purpose of preventing error.

John Jahn, Bonfrère, and Chrismann positively defended this theory. A few other writers speak of it

hesitatingly, but without committing themselves to it.

This theory is condemned by the general trend of Catholic doctrine on the subject. It is also condemned, at least indirectly, by the Vatican Council, which declared that the Church does not consider Scripture to be inspired merely because it contains revelation without error (and that is all that this theory calls for) but because it is written under the influence of the Holy Ghost and has God for its author. But mere negative assistance or simple superintendence can never make God the author, and especially the principal author, of Scripture.

The Biblical word "inspiration" is primarily a verbal noun in the active voice and expresses a *positive act*. It is the cause, of which the book is the effect. How can any one write a book, while merely standing by idle and doing nothing? He who does not suggest either what to write or how to write, does not exercise any influence in the production of a book. He is not its author. He is an idle spectator.

The doctrinal decrees of popes and ecumenical councils are composed under negative divine assistance, and yet no one ever calls them inspired. They are infallible. Therefore negative divine assistance is not equivalent to inspiration.

As we have already seen, the relation existing between them is not that of identity, but that of a part to the whole. Simple negative assistance is only a part, and a very small part, of Biblical inspiration.

3. PARTIAL INSPIRATION

The Church has always believed that Sacred Scripture is divinely inspired; but the question arises: To what extent is Scripture inspired? Does inspiration extend to all, to absolutely all, its parts? or is it limited to things, *e. g.*, pertaining either directly or indirectly to faith and morals?

This is an intricate and important problem. The general teaching of the Church has always been and still is that Scripture is inspired in *all* its parts. However, for the last two or three centuries, a few Catholics have endeavored to restrict inspiration, each after his own fashion and each for reasons not always easy either to discover or to describe with any degree of accuracy. Some would limit inspiration, in order to admit errors, which, they think, are found in Sacred Scripture. Some would limit inspiration, but not inerrancy, which, they suppose, was secured by mere negative divine assistance. Others, again, would not limit inspiration, but hold an inspiration of a lower order than usual is compatible with error in matters of minor importance. However, most of these writers, while maintaining that inspiration extends to all things pertaining either directly or indirectly to faith and morals, contend more or less hesitatingly that it does not extend to the biographical, historical or scientific parts of the Bible. We give the views of some of them.

Before the Council of Trent (1545–1563) Erasmus (d. 1536) taught that the Evangelists did not al-

ways quote directly from the Old Testament, but depended on their memory, and thus sometimes fell into error.[42]

Henry Holden, a Doctor of the Sorbonne (d. 1665), extended inspiration to things pertaining to faith and morals. In all the rest, Scripture is *de facto* free from error, but is not inspired in such a way as to be infallibly true. *"Auctor potuit transgredi, sed non est transgressus."*

Chrismann (d. 1792) restricted inspiration to those parts of Scripture which have been directly revealed by God, but not to those which the sacred writer could have learned by honest human effort. In such parts the writer received a grace sufficient to preserve him from error.

Dr. August Rohling (1872) held much the same view. He subsequently acknowledged the error of his ways, yet, because his opinions gave signs of spreading abroad, Cardinal Franzelin felt constrained to refute them *ex professo* in an appendix to his treatise *De Divinis Scripturis* (4th edition, pp. 520–537).

François Lenormant, a distinguished Orientalist and member of the Institut de France (d. 1883), in the introduction to his "Beginnings of History," stoutly defends the inspiration and the inerrancy of Sacred Scripture in all that either directly or indirectly pertains to faith and morals, but admits that, in things pertaining to history and science, the sacred writers had no more competency to speak than had their contemporaries, and used myths and legends as a vehicle

42 *Com. in Matt.*, 11, 6.

for conveying the truths of religion. He says: "In such matters, the human character of the writers of the Bible is fully evident." This work is on the Index.

Canon S. Di Bartolo, of Palermo, discovered several grades of intensity in Biblical inspiration, especially a maximum and a minimum. The maximum grade secures infallibility in all that pertains to faith and morals. The minimum grade is sometimes so lax, so remiss, so near the low water mark that, in things of lesser moment, it allowed errors to slip into the autographic text of the Bible. This is equivalent to the denial of the inspiration of such parts. The presence of error comes from the absence of inspiration. Bartolo's book, entitled *Criteri Teologici* (Torino, 1888), along with its French translation, was placed on the Index May 14, 1891. A revised and corrected edition, entitled *Nuova Esposizione dei Criteri Teologici,* Rome 1904, escaped censure.

The Barnabite Father Giovanni Semeria holds it necessary to distinguish in Scripture two elements, the one divine, inspired and positively willed by God, the other human, non-inspired and merely permitted. The one is necessary, the other is indifferent, to God's purpose in writing Scripture.[43]

Canon Jules Didiot, professor at the Catholic University of Lille, denied the absolute inerrancy of Scripture in his work *La Logique Surnaturelle Subjective,* 1891, but abandoned this view after the publication of the encyclical "*Providentissimus Deus.*"[44]

43 *Revue Biblique,* 1893, p. 434.

44 See his very instructive *Traité de la Sainte Ecriture d'apres S. S. Leon XIII,* Paris, 1894.

Msgr. d'Hulst, Rector of the Catholic University at Paris (d. 1896), in the well known review, *Le Correspondant,* Jan. 25, 1893, published an article entitled *"La Question Biblique,"* which aroused much animated discussion even beyond the confines of France. While maintaining the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture in all doctrinal matters, he admitted the absence of inspiration and the presence of error in the scientific and in the historical parts of the Bible. For entertaining such opinions he was immediately assailed by such well-known writers as E. Jacquier, Canon Magnier, J. Brucker, E. Grandclaude, and many others.

Alfred Loisy, then Professor of Scripture at the Institut Catholique of Paris, went so far as to deny the inerrancy of Scripture even in matters pertaining to faith and morals. He has entirely drifted away from the straight line of Catholic orthodoxy and several of his many works have been placed on the Index.

The patrons of this new school and their untenable ideas spread so rapidly that "even in many theological seminaries in various parts of Europe students were taught, as a probable theory, that perhaps the historical books (Kings, Paralipomenon, Judges, etc.) are inspired and free from error only in their dogmatic and moral parts." [45] In fact, things had come to such a pass that the Holy See finally determined to put an end to the movement and to insist much more energetically than ever before upon the traditional doctrine of the

[45] *La Controverse,* March, 1886.

Church as regards the plenary inspiration and the consequent plenary infallibility of the Bible.

Accordingly, Pope Leo XIII published his famous encyclical letter "*Providentissimus Deus*," November 18, 1893, the pertinent parts of which we reproduce elsewhere.

For the moment, let it suffice to say that he condemns categorically the theory of partial inspiration, no matter on what principle the restriction is based or how it is applied.

Though it is not claimed that this encyclical is an "*ex cathedra*" utterance, yet it is the most important document ever published by the Holy See on the subject and was everywhere received with the prompt submission due to the supreme authority of the Church speaking on such an important matter.

One result of the encyclical is that Catholic scholars are now ever so much more precise in their statements of the divine character of Scripture, and more careful to declare that the Bible is plenarily inspired and, consequently, infallible in absolutely all its parts, both when speaking of matters pertaining to faith and morals and also in speaking of scientific and historical or any other topics whatsoever.

To show how much the Church is in earnest in this matter, it is enough to remember that the Holy See, in addition to the encyclical "*Providentissimus Deus*," and almost within a decade, has published four other encyclicals all bearing on Sacred Scripture and inculcating the same doctrines as the first. Of these four encyclicals,

The first, addressed to the Father General of the Franciscans, was issued November 25, 1898.

The second, addressed to the Archbishops, Bishops and Clergy of France, appeared September 8, 1899.

The third, by which Pope Leo established the Biblical Commission, for the purpose of encouraging and directing Biblical Studies throughout the Church, was published September 30, 1902.

The fourth is the Decree "*Lamentabili,*" published in 1907, by which Pope Pius X formally condemns all restrictions or limitations placed upon the inspiration or upon the infallibility of the genuine text of Holy Writ.

These encyclicals all enforce, and explain more in detail, the meaning of the decrees of Trent and of the Vatican. From this we infer that if these declarations of popes and councils mean anything at all, they mean that the Sacred Books "in their entirety and in all their parts" have God for their principal author, and in such a way that, if they taught any error, God Himself would be responsible for it,— which is impossible. In other words, they emphatically deny partial, and they as emphatically affirm plenary, inspiration.

If Scripture were only partly inspired, inspired only in spots, it is easy to see how the authority of the Bible would be profoundly shaken and general scepticism as to much of its contents would be the natural result. In such a case almost any part of Scripture could be questioned by anyone and by everyone who chose to do so.

Just to show to what extent, in this hypothesis, in-

credulity could be carried, it will suffice to know that, in the Old Testament, the Pentateuch, Josue, Ruth, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Paralipomenon, Esdras, Nehemias, I and II Maccabees and some other books are almost exclusively historical in character and contents, and, if this theory of partial inspiration were admissible, they would be purely human in origin and subject to suspicion of endless errors.

A fatal objection to this theory of partial inspiration is that its partisans do not tell us precisely where to draw the dividing line between what is inspired and what is not inspired, and between what must be true and what may be false. Also, they do not tell us exactly what is God's and what is man's share in the composition of each book, so that doubt could easily extend to all or to any of its parts. Neither do they show on what foundation the faith of the Christian readers, in this hypothesis, can rest with perfect assurance of possessing the truth. An exposition of doctrinal principles or a narrative of historical events, one part of which came from God only, and another part of which came from man only (and we do not know which came from which), can never be a reliable rule of faith and morals; can never bind the conscience of men; can never enable a man to make an act of divine faith, "without which it is impossible to please God and be saved."

Having elsewhere established the plenary inspiration of Scripture, this theory of partial inspiration, which, as we have just seen, having no support either in Scripture or in divine tradition, or in any declaration

of Church authority, falls to the ground of its own weight.

The theory that there are in Scripture such things as "*obiter dicta*" which, as a few writers have held, are either not inspired or not infallible, is closely related to the preceding question and should be rejected for the same or similar reasons.

As usually defined, "*obiter dicta*" are short phrases, clauses, fragments of sentences or statements of little or no importance to anyone and having no bearing at all on faith and morals. Instances of "*obiter dicta*" are these: Tobias's dog . . . "showed his joy by fawning and wagging his tail."[46] "The cloak which I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, especially the parchments."[47]

Some writers have denied that the "*obiter dicta*" are inspired in any sense of the word or that they are necessarily true. Others, while denying their inspiration, admit that they were written under negative divine assistance and are thus exempt from error. Both statements are untenable.

Cardinal Newman, in an article "On the Inspiration of Scripture" in *The Nineteenth Century,* Feb., 1884, pp. 185–199, endeavors to explain, chiefly to English converts, "What a Catholic is bound to Believe" as regards the Bible. He asserts very frankly that it is an article of Catholic faith that Sacred Scripture, in all that refers, either directly or indirectly, to faith and morals, is inspired by God. But at the same

[46] Tobias, 11, 9. [47] II Tim. 4, 13.

time he admits that there may be in Scripture such things as "*obiter dicta.*" And what does he say about them? It is not easy to know just what he does say; for the Cardinal, like many others then, and some even yet, seems to have labored under considerable confusion of thought as to some of the finer distinctions between revelation and inspiration.

J. Corluy, of Louvain, J. Brucker of Paris, Fr. Schmid of Brixen, D. Healy of Maynooth, J. A. Howlett, and many others, in great haste, assailed the article and at least one of them ascribed to the Cardinal views which he protested he had never uttered, and had never even entertained, and which are not easily found in his article. In fact, he was accused of denying the inspiration and the infallibility of the "*obiter dicta*" in Scripture.

On the other hand, he was defended by some writers, among whom Fr. V. McNabb, O. P., in an interesting chapter devoted exclusively to this special phase of the subject, contends that the Cardinal never denied either (1) the inspiration, or (2) the infallibility of the "*obiter dicta.*" [48]

(a) As to their *inspiration,* Fr. McNabb writes: "It is remarkable that the Cardinal has never yet defined an '*obiter dictum*' in terms of inspiration. . . . He has defined an '*obiter dictum,*' in terms of revelation, where he says, 'An *obiter dictum,* as I understand it, means a phrase or a sentence which . . . from the circumstances, is not necessarily binding on our faith.' In other words an *obiter dictum* is not revealed." To

[48] "Where Believers may Doubt," 1903, pp. 38, 47 and 48.

his mind, therefore, "there is no question [no doubt] of its inspiration, as modern Biblical theologians now understand inspiration as distinct from revelation. Newman merely wishes to say, with St. Thomas, that there are certain historical scientific facts in Scripture which were naturally known to the writer without any supernatural revelation. They were natural (not supernatural) knowledge. Hence, they need not (could not?) be '*de fide.*' To put the matter in another way, Newman merely means to say that the '*obiter dicta*' are *not revealed.*"

(b) As to their *inerrancy,* the Cardinal himself very flatly denies that he has ever associated the idea of error with the "*obiter dictum.*" He writes: "I have implied no such thing. I very much doubt if I have ever once used the word 'error' in connection with the phrase '*obiter dictum.*'" [49]

Fr. McNabb adds: "The question of error or falsehood does not come before him." With him, "there is no question" (no doubt) "of the inspiration of the '*obiter dictum*'." [50]

Pope Leo XIII leaves no doubt that the "*obiter dicta*" are inspired like all other parts of the sacred text; for he says that the sacred writers wrote, "All those things and only those things which God commanded." [51] But, if the "*obiter dicta*" are not inspired, the authors must have written something of their own initiative,— something which God did not command them to write.

[49] What is of Obligation, *ibid.*, pp. 14–16.
[50] *Op. cit.*, pp. 47–48.
[51] "*Ea omnia eaque sola quae Ipse* [*Deus*] *iuberet,*"

4. REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

That inspiration is identical with divine revelation was the opinion of Luther and many other Protestants, even down to our own day. According to some critics Cornelius à Lapide and Janssens may not have been quite immune from this error.

According to this notion, to reveal and to inspire are one and the same divine act. From this it follows that Scripture is divine or sacred or inspired only so far as it contains revealed truths.

The logical consequence of this theory is manifest and suggests the obvious conclusion that is drawn from it, *i. e.,* that the parts of Scripture which contain no revelation (and there are many such parts) are not inspired and therefore need not be true and may be false.

The Council of the Vatican has condemned this error as follows: "The Church holds these books for sacred (inspired) and canonical, not because they contain revelation without error, but because, written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author." Therefore, inspiration is not identical with revelation. Neither is a part of the other. They are always distinct and often separable and even separate.

In what follows we will show some of the many ways in which they differ:

We start with definitions of both REVELATION and INSPIRATION.

Revelation, taken in its broad, etymological sense,

is the removal of a veil, which hinders us from seeing or understanding a thing; hence, it is the manifestation of something previously obscure, hidden, or unknown.

Revelation may be either divine or human.

"*Divine revelation,* of which alone we speak, taken in its strict or narrow sense, is the manifestation of some truth made known to us by God through the supernatural illumination of our mind." [52]

Biblical inspiration is a supernatural influence of the Spirit of God on the spirit of man, both determining or urging him to write and enlightening him while writing, and directing and assisting him to write just what God wishes and no more.

1. Revelation and inspiration differ as to their PURPOSE. The purpose of revelation is to communicate a knowledge of truths not previously known. The purpose of inspiration is to secure a written record of such truths or facts as the Holy Ghost wishes to have committed to writing. Revelation regards the intellect only. Inspiration regards both the intellect and the will of the sacred writer.

2. Revelation and inspiration differ in regard to the STATE OF MIND of the recipient. In revelation the intellect is passive or receptive; it receives. In inspiration the intellect is both active and passive; it transmits to others the knowledge which the mind has either naturally or supernaturally acquired.

3. Revelation and inspiration differ in regard to the

52 A. Tanquery, *Theol. Dogmatica Fundam.*, pp. 91, 92.

PERSONS to whom they are attributed. Jesus Christ reveals. The Holy Ghost inspires. Revelation is usually ascribed to the Logos, the eternal Word. He is both the revealer and the revealed; He is both the subject and the object of revelation; He is revelation both active and passive; He is revelation both by word and by deed. He is "God manifested in the flesh." We nowhere read that He ever received any revelations, because He is not the channel through which they reach us; He is the original source from which all divine communications are derived. The Holy Ghost inspires: *"Spiritus ubi vult spirat."*

4. Revelation and inspiration differ in EXTENT. All Scripture is inspired. But not all Scripture is revealed. Inspiration pervades the entire book. Revelation belongs to certain parts only. Many parts of Scripture were known to the sacred penman by natural means and did not need to be revealed. Some of the historical and sapiential books which contain scarcely any revelations, are made up, in great part, either of such facts as fall under observation and can be proved on the testimony of reliable witnesses, or consist of ethical truths of the natural, moral order, a knowledge of which can be obtained by reason and meditation. But in regard to such subjects as lie beyond the range of human investigation and human intelligence, such as mysteries, the secrets of the human heart, future events altogether dependent on either the free will of God or the free will of man, together with the knowledge of those things which might have been acquired in the ordinary way, but which, in point of fact, were not so

acquired, they must have been learned either immediately or mediately by revelation.

5. Revelation and inspiration differ in point of TIME. Revelation usually precedes inspiration; but by what lapse of time cannot, and need not, be determined. Some prophets received revelations and either never wrote them down, or wrote them down only many years after they had received them, and even then in a very compendious form. In any case, it is evident that revelation is no part of inspiration. It may, or may not, accompany it. It is not one of its elements. They are two things distinguishable and distinct. They differ, not only in degree, but even in kind. For either may exist absolutely and completely in itself without the other.

Some "holy men of old" received revelations but were never inspired to write them down, and some were inspired to write, though they had never directly received revelations.

6. Revelation and inspiration differ in point of IMPORTANCE; for revelation is superior to inspiration. The art of printing is of more consequence than the history of that invention. So, too, God's manifestation of Himself is worth more to us than the Scriptural record of it can be. Adam's existence has had more to do with us than any biography or autobiography of the first man could have had, even though written under the guidance of inspiration.

In a certain sense it was quite accidental that revelation was ever committed to writing in the Sacred Scriptures. For, after all, even an inspired narrative

is only one of many modes of transmitting to posterity the truths of revelation. In point of fact much revealed doctrine is transmitted in the Church by oral tradition alone. The primitive divine communcations made to Adam were for many centuries handed down orally, and the revelations made to the world by Christ Himself did their first work some decades before the Evangelists recorded them in the Gospels. Had the art of writing never been invented, revelations would have been made and would have accomplished the end for which they were given.

As we have seen, divine revelation, in its strict sense, is the immediate supernatural manifestation of any truth formerly unknown. But it is well to know that the word is often, though improperly, used in a broader sense in reference to faith, to mean an immediate testification of the Holy Spirit. In this broad sense, we often call revealed all truths, whether formerly known or unknown, whether knowable or naturally unknowable, provided they are the object of divine testification.

In this wide sense, revelation is identical with "*locutio Dei,*" and hence the inspiration to write Sacred Books is called a divine revelation; and in this sense all Scripture is a revelation, because all Scripture is "*Verbum Dei scriptum,*" and must be believed with a divine supernatural faith. But with revelation, in this very lax and improper sense, we are not now concerned.

Now, if it was not absolutely necessary that revelations should have been written down at all, still less was it essential that they should have been written un-

der the influence of that special guidance called inspiration. All that is strictly indispensable is that the record should be credible, reliable, truthful. To secure this, what is generally called "negative assistance" would have amply sufficed. The dogmatic definitions of ecumenical councils are infallible, but they are not inspired. It is also conceivable, at least in the abstract, that a perfectly trustworthy record of Revelation could have been composed without negative assistance or any other supernatural intervention by means of the ordinary faculties of the mind and by the usual facilities furnished by education and honest effort. So long as the witness told the truth, it would be, from some point of view, a matter of indifference whether the narrative was composed by human means or under divine guidance.

As a matter of fact, in the case of most mediate revelations, is not the divine message communicated without the safeguard of inspiration? The text is inspired, but the sermon preached on the text is not inspired; neither are the dogmatic definitions of popes and councils inspired. Infallibility or mere reliability is enough; by whatsoever means acquired. Most of those who receive from their professors and transmit to their flocks the word of revealed truth do so without that special direction called inspiration. Yet the inspiration of Holy Scripture has the effect of making all Scripture, even in the parts that were not revealed, infallible, and communicates to it the additional dignity of being the Word of God, and the basis on which we can make an act of divine faith.

5. MECHANICAL INSPIRATION

The first and most highly exaggerated theory of Biblical inspiration is the mechanical or organic theory, usually so-called because it represents the sacred writers as mere machines, as passive instruments (*organa*) in the hand of God, moving merely as they were moved.

As might be expected, this theory is understood and is explained in a great variety of senses, according as the sacred writer is represented either as *wholly* or as *partly* bereft of his senses, or according as he is allowed to exercise *more* or *less* some of his mental faculties.

This is the earliest of all the theories of inspiration with which we are acquainted, and it has exercised a far-reaching influence on Jews and Christians alike.

The prophets of the pagan world, when under the influence of the heathen god or deity, are represented as violent almost to insanity. The etymology of the word "*mantis*" shows a close affinity with the word "*mania*," insanity, madness, frenzy. Virgil, in his Aeneid, describes the Cumaean Sibyl as prophesying under the inspiration of some heathen deity, perhaps Apollo, and delivering her oracles in a sort of ecstasy, trance or frenzy, and without power of self-control.

Views similar to those of the pagans and borrowed perhaps from their pagan neighbors, prevailed among some of the Jews in the first centuries of the Christian era. The earliest writer on this subject is Philo,

the Jewish scholar, Alexandrian philosopher and brilliant exponent of Judaeo-Hellenic thought at the time of Christ. He tells us that the sacred writers were "passive and in ecstasy" while writing. "The prophet gives forth nothing of his own, but acts at the prompting of another in all his utterances. As long as he is under inspiration, he is in ignorance, his reason departing from its place; for, yielding up the citadel of his soul, the divine Spirit enters into it and dwells in it." [53]

About fifty years after Philo, Josephus, the great Jewish historian, says that Balaam prophesied, "not as master of himself, but moved by the Holy Spirit to say what he said." [54] He represents Balaam as saying to King Balak: "Thinkest thou that it is in our power to speak or to be silent . . . when the spirit of God takes possession of us? For he causes us to utter such words and such speeches as he wishes, and without our knowledge; for when he has entered into us, nothing that is in us is any longer our own." [55]

The Jewish rabbins, according to all accounts of them, were, at a very early date, believers in the strictest theory of inspiration. Many of them held that God Himself handed down from Heaven the Mosaic writings, already written. They had a tradition that, when Moses arrived at the summit of Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, "he found God writing with His own hand the ornamental letters at the head of the chapters in the book of the law." In their

53 *De Special.*, leg. 4–9.
54 *Antiqu.*, 4, 6, 5.
55 *Contra Appion.*, c. 8.

superstitious reverence for the law of Moses, the rabbins taught that God Himself was so fascinated by the ineffable perfection of the Pentateuch that he spent three hours a day studying it.

As to the Fathers of the Church, the great majority never admitted, but stoutly repudiated, this exaggerated theory of inspiration. A few of them, it is true, sometimes use expressions which have been understood to imply that they considered Holy Scripture mechanically inspired. However, it seems more probable that they used such language merely for the purpose of illustrating in a rhetorical way that Scripture was composed under a powerful divine influence.

There have been some Catholics also who held the mechanical theory of inspiration in one form or another, but this theory was condemned by the early councils of the Church, as approaching too near to the heathen doctrine of the *manteia.*

It has been the general, though not the uniform, opinion of Catholics that our sacred writers, while under the influence of inspiration, retained the fullest exercise of all their mental faculties, intelligence, will, memory, imagination, senses, and were calm, free, conscious and perfectly self-possessed.

6. VERBAL DICTATION

This is a modified form of the mechanical theory. It supposes that the inspired writers were not entirely bereft of their senses, but were sufficiently conscious to receive impressions, and had sufficient self-control to write them down, word for word, though having little

or no share either in the choice of the thoughts or in the selection of the words. As the name of this theory implies, the words were *dictated* to them, *i. e.,* placed almost on the tip of the pen, and all they had to do was to write them down quite mechanically. This is properly called the theory of verbal *dictation,* which is mechanical. Verbal *inspiration,* which is dynamical, is an entirely different thing, as we have seen.

7. MYSTICAL INSPIRATION

The extravagances of extreme dogmatists, shortly after the Reformation, caused, as is usual in such cases, a rebound to the opposite extreme, and became responsible for much of the doubt and disquiet which now prevails on this subject outside the Church.

One result of this recoil is that extreme views have become current under the names of mystical or illuminative, and natural or naturalistic inspiration. Their advocates, in general, hold that inspiration is little or nothing more than a higher development of that natural insight or intuition into truth which all men possess in some degree, for it is a gift of nature. They hold that it is simply a higher order or grade of intelligence which, in morals and in religion generally, results quite naturally in the production of sacred books of the same sort as the Bible; just as, in worldly matters, a similar order of natural intelligence gives rise to great works in art, literature, science, etc.

8. NATURAL INSPIRATION

According to this theory, all direct and miraculous

intervention of God in the affairs of the world is denied except in two cases.

a) The Creation of man, that is, of the soul of man, and

b) The Incarnation of Christ. Everything else, the Bible included, is exclusively natural.

This theory is quite modern and is generally held by Rationalists and by rationalizing Protestants. It was first broached by Schleiermacher early in the last century. It was afterwards introduced into England by S. T. Coleridge. F. D. Maurice and F. W. Robertson gave it currency, and it has been accepted very extensively in Germany, Great Britain, and America. Its advocates are fond of assuring us that it is the only theory capable of satisfying the demands of the emancipated spirit of the age in which we live.

This theory starts from two suppositions:

a) That a spiritual, perhaps a supernatural, illumination is communicated to each and every believer in Christ, and

b) That the inspiration of the Scriptural writers is really identical in kind with the universal illumination of the ordinary Christian.

These two are the same in kind, though different in degree. There is more of this illumination in the Bible than in any other literature, but it is all, or nearly all, the gift of nature. As explained by many writers of this school, it is often difficult to find in it even a trace of the supernatural.

By one short cut many disciples of Schleiermacher completely obliterated the hazy distinction between the

spiritual illumination given to all Christians and the natural light of reason granted to all men.

The advocates of the theory of natural inspiration are accustomed to describe Sacred Scripture in the most glowing colors. They frankly admit that it is inspired throughout, but they degrade it by bringing its inspiration down to the level of strong emotion, of fervid imagination, of poetic enthusiasm, of natural genius,— all of which, in some vague and general sense, is occasionally called inspiration, and even divine inspiration, or the divine "afflatus." As is well known, it was usual in ancient times to imagine that signal talents were a special gift of the gods, and that the painter, the sculptor, the poet, the brilliant orator and the conquering hero were all impelled by an overpowering impulse of the deity, which they called inspiration. So, according to the above writers, inspiration is nothing more than poetic frenzy, or deep religious excitement, or the powerful emotion of the soul, pure and ardent, and pouring forth its thoughts on God and on the things of God in simple and noble and elevated language.

Biblical inspiration, they say, is the same kind of inspiration that is sometimes ascribed to Plato, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare. Thus, mere natural genius is mistaken for the strictly supernatural impulse and divine guidance of the Spirit of God.

a) The Atheist, the Materialist, and the Pantheist *all deny* the very existence of God and, along with it, the entire supernatural order, including, of course, the possibility of divine inspiration.

b) The Deist, the Naturalist, and the Rationalist *all admit* the existence of God, but all deny, each after his own fashion and to a different extent, His intervention in the affairs of the world.

The Deist believes in God, *i. e.,* in a God conscious, intelligent, distinct from and above the universe, but so far above and beyond the universe as to have no interest in it and to let it take care of itself. Having once created the world of matter and the world of mind, and having imposed upon them the laws of their being,— the laws by which they are governed,— He leaves them to go their way as best they can, and never afterwards interferes with their course, or so little that it is not worth mentioning.

So, the difference between the Deist and the Theist is this: The Deist believes in a great, lazy, idle God who is so supremely happy in Himself that he has no concern for created things, whereas the Theist believes in a live, active God, who takes care of what belongs to Him, and, having found it worth His while to create things, still finds it worth His while to take care of them.

Thus, the Deist explicitly *admits,* and implicitly *denies,* the existence of God,— denies it by denying His immanence and His providence,— attributes essential to His very existence. An improvident God is no God.

The Naturalist, and still more the Rationalist, allows God greater freedom to interfere in the affairs of His creatures. Still, for different motives and to a different extent, they both reject the supernatural

order, such as mysteries, miracles, prophesies, revelations and inspiration, or, if they still retain the names, they reject the substance or reality of these things. God, they say, always acts according to the fixed laws of nature and through secondary natural causes, and never otherwise.

Accordingly, if God ever reveals, He reveals, not as the author of *grace,* but only as the author of *nature.* Likewise, if He ever inspires, the inspiration is simply the result of natural genius, of human sagacity — the effect of a deeper and more penetrating insight or of a more spiritual intuition into things. Now, such geniuses, if you choose to say so, are all inspired, and inspired more than others, but are inspired by nature only. There is, then, a difference in degree, but there is no difference in kind, between these so-called inspired men and non-inspired men. Merely the ones are more and the others are less inspired. Thus the advocates of this theory retain the name, but if you examine them a little carefully you will discover that they reject the substance and reality of inspiration.

This is a very common theory among rationalizing Protestants.

Most of these negative theories are so manifestly false and so opposed to all that we have heretofore seen, that it needs, at most, a clear exposition, but no formal effort, to refute them. But should a refutation be necessary, the student or the general reader is referred to some of our best works on Catholic philosophy and on fundamental theology, where the criteria underlying such problems are thoroughly discussed.

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PART II

HISTORY OF THE CANON OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In the preceding part we established the criteria, the existence, the nature, the extent, and the effects of inspiration within the limits of any one inspired book.

We discussed inspiration, in general and in the abstract, without attempting to locate it in any particular book. But the student of Scripture, before undertaking to interpret the Sacred Volume, should know by name and in the *concrete* or *in individuo,* which are, and which are not, inspired books; else he might find himself engaged in a commentary on the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Henoch, the Koran or the Talmud.

Accordingly, the question which we are now to discuss is this: *To which and to how many books does inspiration extend? Or how many and which books are on the official catalogue of the Church?* We must know how to *identify* them; we must be able to mention them in concrete, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Thus, in the history of the Canon, we discuss the gradual formation of the collection or catalogue of in-

spired books into a body of sacred literature, distinct from all other books and forming a part of the remote rule of faith and morals.

Under this title the following questions are usually discussed:

1. What is the meaning or definition of the word canon and of the canon of Scripture?

2. What is the difference between the canonical, the proto-canonical, the deutero-canonical, and the apocryphal books?

3. How did the collection of books called the canon, come to be formed?

4. What makes this collection an authoritative standard of faith and practice? Is it inspiration only? Or is it both inspiration and canonization?

5. Were there two official canons of the Old Testament among the Jews before the time of Christ, the one the Palestinian and the other the Alexandrian? or only one?

6. Did the Jews ever admit as sacred, did they ever positively reject as profane, our seven deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament?

7. What is the difference between inspiration and canonization?

8. What is the only public, universal, and infallibly certain criterion of the inspiration and also of the canonicity of the sacred books?

It is very important to the student, from the beginning, to obtain a clear and definite notion of the general meaning and the various shades of meaning of the words *canon, canonized, canonical, proto-canonical,*

deutero-canonical, apocryphal, anonymous, pseudonymous, pseudo-epigraphical.

1. Etymology, History, and Meaning of the Word Canon

The word canon, in its primary sense, means a reed, a rod, a rule, with which to draw straight lines or to measure distances. With time it came to mean anything that served as a guide or model or rule of action; something to regulate or control conduct; a test or standard, in accordance with which anything is to be compared, adjusted or regulated.

The Alexandrian grammarians used the word for those classical writers that were considered rules or models of elegant style and language. It also meant a measured distance or space, as at Olympia. In the first case the word is active, in the second case it is passive.

The word was soon applied to the collection of inspired writings, also to disciplinary decrees of councils, to catalogues of martyrs and saints, and to lists of the clergy belonging to some particular place or church, etc.

Some think that the list of sacred books is called canon, because they were a rule of faith, a criterion, or standard, by which to determine or to regulate belief and conduct. If so, the word has an active sense.

Others think that it was because those books were thus "admitted by rule," "regulated" or "canonized" by the Church. If so, the word has also a passive sense.

The canon may be defined as *the catalogue or collection of books which the Church has declared to be divinely inspired, and which she regards as a partial, remote rule of faith and morals.*

In the first part of this definition, the word canon is used in a *passive sense,* to mean that the books have been put in the canon, "admitted by rule," "catalogued," "regulated," "canonized."

In the second part of the definition, the word is understood in an *active sense,* to mean that the books, in consequence of having been declared divine, are now become a *regulative principle* of faith and morals, a criterion or standard of belief and practice.

In the definition we say advisedly, "the catalogue" of books, that is, a list of the *mere names* of the books, as when we enumerate them from Genesis to the Apocalypse; we also say "the collection" of books, that is, the names of the books with the books attached to them,— the Bible in concrete form.

2. Kinds of Canonical Books

The books which the Council of Trent placed in the canon or official list of sacred books, are all canonical, are all called by the general title of canonical. They are divided into two classes, some being called *proto*-canonical, the others, *deutero*-canonical.

This distinction depends on the *time* when the books were "canonized." The books placed in the canon from the very beginning, and about whose inspiration there never was any serious doubt, are called proto-canonical (*pro*=before; *protos*=first; *proto-canoni-*

cal=belonging to the first or original canon of Scripture).

The books that were placed on the canon some time later and about whose inspiration there was, here and there, more or less uncertainty in the mind of the Church, are called deutero-canonical (*duo*=two; *deuteros*=second; *deutero-canonical*=belonging to or constituting the second canon of Scripture). Thus, this term is applied to books whose inspiration was at first contested, but afterwards admitted, by the Church.

The use of these two compound adjectives to indicate this distinction is not very ancient. It was adopted after the definition of the Council of Trent. Sixtus Senensis, in the sixteenth century, was the first to give it currency. Though the words are relatively new, the idea or the distinction which they were intended to convey, is as old, at least, as the early part of the fourth century.

Eusebius was accustomed to call our proto-canonical books the "*homologoumenoi*" or "generally accepted books," about which there was no controversy; and our deutero-canonical books he called the "*antilegomenoi*" or "doubtful," "contested," "contradicted books," whose claim to a place in the canon was, by some and for a while, contested and disputed, but afterwards granted.

These two words, proto-canonical and deutero-canonical, do not imply any difference between the books from the point of view of authority or canonicity. Some time must have elapsed after composition, before *any* of our books were placed in the canon. So

a longer or a shorter time makes no essential difference. "*Plus vel minus non mutat speciem.*" Therefore, all our canonical books, both proto- and deutero-canonical, are equally inspired and equally sacred and canonical.

This distinction was made for convenience sake and for the purpose of easier reference. It has no interest, unless from an historical point of view. It retains the souvenir of ancient doubts and asserts the canonicity of the books about which there were doubts.

Both classes of books called by Eusebius "*homologoumenoi*" and "*antilegomenoi*" were opposed to a third class called the "*nothoi*" or spurious, false, forged, counterfeit, supposititious, not genuine, not authoritative, not canonical but apocryphal books.

Accordingly, the proto-canonical books are those books which were ever and always regarded as divine, whose inspiration was never seriously disputed and which were placed in the canon from, or almost from, the beginning, or earlier than the others. These books are sometimes called the "first canon."

The deutero-canonical books are those books whose inspiration gave rise, for some time or in some places, to more or less uncertainty, and which, for this reason, were not placed in the canon until some time after the others; *i. e.*, not till, after careful examination, the doubt had disappeared. These books are sometimes called the "second canon."

The *deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament* are the following seven: (1) Tobias, (2) Judith, (3) Wisdom, (4) Ecclesiasticus, (5) Baruch, (6) I Maccabees, and (7) II Maccabees.

The deutero-canonical *fragments* or parts of books of the Old Testament are the following: (1) The seven last chapters of Esther, (10, 4; to 16, 24); (2) The prayer of Azarias and the Canticle of the three children in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3, 24–90); (3) The history of Susanna (Dan. Cap. 13); and (4) The history of Bel and the Dragon (Dan. Cap. 14).

All the other books and parts of books of the Old Testament are proto-canonical and were all written originally in Hebrew or Aramaic.

The *deutero-canonical books of the New Testament* are the following, also seven in number: (1) The Epistle to the Hebrews; (2) The Epistle of St. James; (3) The II Epistle of St. Peter; (4) The II and (5) the III Epistle of St. John; (6) The Epistle of St. Jude; (7) The Apocalypse.

The deutero-canonical *fragments* or parts of books of the New Testament are the following: (1) The conclusion of St. Mark's Gospel (16, 9–20); (2) The account of the bloody sweat, Luke, (22, 43–44); (3) The account of the woman taken in adultery (John 8, 1–12). All the other books and parts of books of the New Testament are proto-canonical. To these may be added the following verses which some writers in our day have disputed: (4) John 5, 4; (5) I John 5, 7; and (6) Matthew 16, 2–3.

Apocryphal Books

A *canonical* book, then, is any book that has been officially recognized by the Church as divinely inspired

and, as such, has been placed in the canon. On the other hand,

An *apocryphal* book is any book which either its author or others *claimed* to be divinely inspired, but which the Church does not recognize as such and refuses to place in the canon.

The word *apocryphal* is derived from the Greek, *apo*=from, and *krupto*=hide. Accordingly, it means, literally, hidden, concealed, private, secret, recondite, withheld from the public.

As applied to books, apocryphal has had various meanings and various shades of meaning, some good, some bad, and some indifferent.

Among the pagans of ancient Greece and Rome, the word was used to designate books preserved in the *abditum* of the temple, *i. e., withheld* from the knowledge of the general public and containing an esoteric or recondite kind of doctrine, known only to the initiated.

The *Jews,* both before and after Christ, possessed an abundance of such literature. Good samples of it are the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Henoch, and many others.

The early *heretics,* especially the Gnostics, produced great quantities of aprocryphal works, as a means for propagating their false doctrines among the people.

The word apocryphal is as old as the thing which it designates and existed centuries before the Christian era. Yet St. Clement of Alexandria was the first to apply the term to apocryphal books as written by Christians, whether orthodox or heterodox.

In the past, the word apocryphal has been very variously used; (1) To designate books of uncertain origin or unknown authorship; (2) To designate books that circulated under no name or under a false name (under no name=anonymous; under a false name=pseudonymous); (3) To designate books whose contents were either immoral, or heretical, or suspected of heresy; (4) To designate books which, for a variety of reasons, were not permitted to be read in the public services of the Church.

In the early ages of the Church, the word had a wider meaning. Rufinus says: "We hold as apocryphal the writings which the Fathers did not allow to be read in the public services of the Church." In this sense, the word is opposed to common, public, and means "not read." As the canon was not open to such books, the word apocryphal soon came to mean "not canonical."

Thus, it seems essential to an apocryphal work that the claim to inspiration should have been made for it either by the writer himself or by others, and that it should have been *rejected* or at least *neglected* by the Church. Thus, the works of Josephus, or of Polycarp, or of Ignatius Martyr, or of Justin Martyr were never called apocryphal, because no one ever claimed that they were inspired or canonical.

Inspiration can be claimed for a book either by the writer himself or by others.

A writer may claim inspiration for his book in two ways; either:

(1) Explicitly or in so many words, or
(2) Implicitly or in a way that would be considered equivalent to such claim.

If a book is written, for example, in the name of Solomon or of the Apostle St. Paul, or if it is entitled a Gospel, or pretends to describe the life and revelations of the Apostle, even though not claiming to have been written by him, the author would be supposed to claim inspiration in that tacit manner.

The word apocryphal may be taken in either a good or in a bad sense. If the author does not seriously claim inspiration, either explicitly or implicitly, and if the contents of the book are irreproachable both doctrinally and ethically, it surely is not his fault if, long after he is dead and gone, others falsely claim inspiration for it. Such was the case with the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome.

But if the writer, in any of many ways, falsely and seriously (and not as a mere *nom de plume*), lays claim to inspiration, or if the contents of the book are either morally or doctrinally objectionable, the book is apocryphal in some of the many bad senses of the word.

Many of the apocrypha were apocalyptic in style, *i. e.*, full of fictitious visions and revelations, mostly in the form of prophesies.

Protestants, in the wake of Luther, very wrongly call our deutero-canonical books "apocrypha," and what we call apocryphal, as just described, they call pseudo-epigraphical. This is not warranted by ancient usage.

3. The Criterion of Canonicity under the Old Law

As inspiration is a supernatural and psychological act, taking place in the innermost recesses of the soul, and not perceivable by any of the senses, it follows necessarily that it can be known only by divine supernatural revelation. This is the general criterion which must be true of the books both of the Old and of the New Testament. We have already seen that this revelation of God is transmitted to us Christians on the testimony of the Church. But the question just now is this: Under the law of Moses, and before the Christian Church was in existence, by what criterion, by what precise method or detailed process was this divine revelation communicated to the Jewish Synagogue and to the Hebrew people? We confess that we do not know; we are left to conjecture.

However, there can be no doubt that there was some perfectly reliable method at hand for the purpose. It is generally thought that the revelation was communicated to and through the high priests, or, what is more probable, through the prophets and, in the absence of the prophets, through men who had received from God a special mission, confirmed by miracles, to decide such matters in His name.

The extraordinary mission, the special vocation of the prophets, the sanctity of their private life, and their public ministry, often sanctioned by miraculous intervention in their favor, all assure us that the testimony which they gave to the divine origin and authority of

the sacred books comes from God, that it is God Himself who, through them, certifies that He inspired the books and that, therefore, they are to be accepted on the authority of His word.

We find a corroboration of all this in the words of Josephus, the historian of the Chosen People and himself a member of the priestly caste, who, if any one, ought to know perfectly well just what was done in such matters. He says: "From the time of Artaxerxes to our own time, our history has been written down very particularly [accurately and in detail]; but these books have not been considered worthy of the same credit as those of earlier date, because there has not been since then an *accurate succession of prophets.*" [1]

4. Inspiration and Canonization Discriminated

As some students find it difficult to discriminate adequately between these words, we will show some of the many ways in which they differ.

(1) Inspiration and canonization differ in this: Inspiration precedes canonization in the order of *time, thought,* and *causality.* Inspiration was simultaneous with the act of composing the book. It produced the book. It is the cause of the book. The book is its effect. Canonization, on the other hand, is subsequent to inspiration in the logical, in the chronological, and in the ontological order. Canonization may take place even centuries after the book was written, as in the

1 *Contra Appion.*, 1, 8.

case of the deutero-canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.

Inspiration, therefore, is independent of canonization, but canonization is dependent on inspiration and presupposes its previous existence.

The Church can not canonize a non-inspired book, but she can canonize an inspired book, provided it has a divine apostolic tradition testifying to its inspiration.

Then, all canonical books are necessarily inspired, but not all inspired books are necessarily canonical.

(2) Inspiration and canonization also differ in this: Inspiration is *in se,* that is, in itself, absolute, complete and dependent on God alone. Canonization, on the other hand, is *quoad nos,* that is, relative to us; it is incomplete and dependent on inspiration and on the Church.

Canonization does not change or in any way affect the book in itself. It merely affects us. It changes our attitude towards the book. That is, it makes us certain, with the certainty of faith, that the book is divine, and that it was divine from the first moment of is existence.

(3) Inspiration and canonization differ furthermore in this: Inspiration is occult; it is psychological; it is intrinsic to the writer and to the book; it is imperceptible to the senses. It is a secret act of God. It cannot be seen, or heard, or felt, or weighed, or measured by any of our bodily senses. The inspired man himself did not necessarily know that he was inspired. He felt an impulse to write; yes; but, without a divine revelation he did not, and he could not, know whence

came that impulse, whether from within or from above or from below. In such things how many have been deceived! The Holy Spirit, who inspired him, is the only one who, by original knowledge, knows that the writer was inspired, and it is the Holy Ghost who revealed this fact to the Church, and the Church authentically revealed it to the world at large by the process of canonization.

Apropos of this, the Councils of Trent and of the Vatican say: "The Church holds these books to be sacred and canonical . . . because having been written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, they have God for their author and, as such, have been delivered to the Church." [2]

Canonization, on the other hand, is public and is extrinsic to the book, and can be perceived by the senses. It is an open, manifest act of the Church. It is nothing more than an official declaration by the Church that the book in question is inspired, and that it was inspired from the first instant of its existence. It is an authentic, external manifestation of the internal divine character of the book.

Briefly, God *inspires* the book; the Church *canonizes* it. God is the *author* of the book; the Church is the *publisher.*

(4) Inspiration and canonization differ moreover in this: In the treatise on inspiration we inquire: How far does inspiration extend within the limits of each book? Does it extend to all its material parts, *i. e.,* to

2 Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution "On Revelation," Par. 3; Decrees of Trent, Sess. IV, "*De Canonicis Scripturis.*"

all its chapters, verses, words? Does it extend to all its formal parts, *i. e.,* to all its assertions, ideas, thoughts? Or only to the dogmatic and moral or religious truths? We hold that inspiration extends to all the genuine, original parts of each inspired book, and to all the teachings and assertions of the sacred writer.

On the other hand, in the History of the Canon we inquire: How far does inspiration extend among *books?* Does it extend, not only to the books in the canon, but also to other books, for instance, to the book of Henoch, to the Epistles of Clement and Barnabas, or to the Pastor of Hermas? It is probably limited to the books now in the canon.

CATHOLIC CRITERION

The testimony of Christ, or of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles to the inspiration and the canonicity of each book, and of all the books, of Sacred Scripture is not fully and adequately found either in Scripture or in human tradition; but is contained partly in Sacred Scripture and fully and clearly in divine ecclesiastical tradition, as interpreted by the Catholic Church.

Consequently, the canon of the sacred books, promulgated by the Council of Trent and found, for instance, in the Latin Vulgate and in our Douay Version, is perfectly legitimate and has the force of an ecumenical decree.

CHAPTER I

THE CANON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Jews and Protestants hold as canonical only the proto-canonical books of the Old Testament. Catholics and all the Oriental Churches hold as canonical all the proto-canonical and all the deutero-canonical books, and some deutero-canonical fragments of the Old Testament. For this reason it is found to be more convenient to treat separately of (1) the Jewish, and (2) the Christian canons.

§ 1. History of the Jewish Canon

The history of the Old Testament canon is involved in great obscurity, caused (1) by the remote antiquity of the time in which it originated, (2) by the scarcity of documentary evidence bearing on the subject, and (3) by the indefinite character of that evidence. However, some information on the subject can be gathered from the Bible itself, some from the writings of Philo and Josephus, and some from the Talmud.

On account of this obscurity, there are naturally many, but principally two opinions — the modern and the traditional — about (1) the origin, (2) the growth, and (3) the close of the Old Testament Canon. We shall endeavor to describe them as briefly as is consistent with substantial clearness.

Existence of Two Canons

One of the most remarkable facts connected with this subject and the occasion of much confusion of thought, is that there are two different canons of the Old Testament; that is,

a) *A Palestinian Canon,* used by the Hebrew or Semitic speaking Jews of Palestine and of countries lying mostly to the East, *e. g.,* Syria and Mesopotamia. The Palestinian Canon is called also the Hebrew Canon, because its books were written originally in Hebrew or in the cognate Aramaic, and are still extant in Hebrew.

b) *An Alexandrian Canon,* used by the Greek-speaking or Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria and of countries lying mostly to the West, *e. g.,* Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The Alexandrian Canon is called also the Hellenistic or Greek Canon, because all its books are now in Greek, having been either translated into Greek or originally written in Greek. Greek was the original language of two Old Testament Books, Wisdom and II Maccabees.

Theories Concerning the Formation of the Canon

The *modern* opinion about the *origin, growth,* and *close* of the Old Testament canon is that it grew by three sudden leaps or bounds, and into three separate parts, usually called "the Law, the Prophets, and the Other Writings."

This three-fold division of the Hebrew Bible, which is often mentioned in the New Testament, is found for

the first time in the short prologue to the Greek translation of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, which was written about B. C. 130.

Now it is thought by the friends of this modern opinion that this three-fold division of the Hebrew Bible will give us some hint as to the manner in which the Canon of the Old Testament began, grew, and closed; for they claim to have found at least two instances of a formal recognition or promulgation of a book as sacred and canonical.

a) *The First Part of the Canon, "The Law."* As to the first instance, we read that, while repairs were going on in the Temple at Jerusalem, 621 B. C., the "Book of the Law" was discovered and recognized as a divine book by Helcias, the High Priest, by King Josias, and by all the people, and was made the basis or starting-point of a lasting religious reformation. "'And Helcias the high priest said to Saphan the scribe: 'I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord.'" [3] Again, "Helcias the priest found the book of the Law of the Lord, by the hand of Moses. And he said to Saphan the scribe, I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord; and he delivered it to him." [4]

It is claimed that this is proof conclusive that the formal beginning of the Old Testament canon goes back at least to the year 621 B. C.

Among some of the learned it is much disputed whether this "Law of the Lord" was merely an abstract or first rough draft of the Law, whether it

[3] IV Kings, 22, 8. [4] II Paral. 34, 14–15.

was Deuteronomy only, or the entire Pentateuch, or whether it was a subsequent transcript or the original autographic copy of "the Law written by the very hand of Moses."

In any case, it seems not to have been made canonical for the first time at that late date, 621 B. C.; for it was immediately recognized as a book which had formerly exercised supreme authority in matters of faith and morals, but had long since been neglected and forgotten.

It also seems that this same book of the Law, with, perhaps, many additions, was publicly acknowledged as divine on a very solemn occasion in the days of Esdras and Nehemias, about B. C. 444.[5]

b) *The Second Part of the Canon, "The Prophets."* The Prophets, both former and later, both major and minor, are a continuation of the history of Israel from Moses to the Exile. They were written at irregular intervals and were added to the first part of the canon, or the Law, they say, about 300 B. C. or 150 after Esdras. Since they are mentioned as a distinct class in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, which was written about B. C. 130, we may suppose that they were canonized a century or two earlier.

c) *The Third Part of the Canon, "The Writings."* "The Writings" form the third part of the Hebrew canon. The mention of them in the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, as a class distinct from "the Law and the Prophets," shows that, at that precise time, this collection was at least begun, if not already finished.

In this connection, one important consideration is

5 Nehemias, 8, 9. The entire eighth chapter should be read.

that the translator of Ecclesiasticus does not inform us *which* or *how many* books belonged to this collection, neither does he tell us whether the canon was closed and, if so, when or by whom it was closed.

Many patrons of this modern opinion tell us that the third part of the Hebrew Bible did not receive final approval or formal canonization till the middle of the second century of the Christian era, *i. e.*, till the restoration of the Jewish commonwealth, while others place it as late as the time of the Talmudists.

There is a tendency at present to question the formation of the Old Testament canon in accordance with the three-fold division of the "Law," the "Prophets," and the "Writings." The Greek version, which was begun about 285 B. C., has no trace of this triple division, and the books are otherwise arranged. Nor is there any sufficient reason for believing that some of the "Writings" were not canonized before some of the "Prophets" were gathered into a separate collection.

Origin of the Palestinian Canon

The *traditional* opinion is that the earliest trace that we can find of the origin of the Old Testament canon reaches back into the days of Moses, the great legislator of Israel. Of this we read that "Moses, having written this Law in a book, gave it to the priests and to the levites and to the ancients of Israel and commanded that it should be read every seventh year in the hearing of all Israel and that it should be placed by the ark of the covenant to be kept as a testimony against Israel." [6]

6 Deut. 31, 9–13 and 24–26.

The advocates of this view have no doubt that this is the nucleus or first beginning of the canon of the Old Testament.

Growth of the Palestinian Canon

They claim that the books which were written in the long interval of 800 years, stretching from the days of Moses down to the Babylonian Captivity, according as they were recognized as inspired, were, one by one or in small groups, gradually added to the Pentateuch, and that thus the canon grew gradually and imperceptibly.

It is maintained that these writings were not only gathered together and preserved in small separate collections, but that they were finally added to what Moses had written so many centuries before. This was certainly done in the case of Josue, "who wrote all these things in the volume of the law of the Lord." [7]

We also read: "Samuel explained to the people the law of the kingdom and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord," no doubt, by the side of the Ark of the Covenant.[8]

They appeal also to a double collection of Psalms, the first by David and the second by Asaph. "The Levites praised the Lord in the words of David and Asaph." [9] From this it appears that the Psalms of Asaph were added to the already existing collection of Psalms by David.

Another collection of writings is referred to in these words: "These are also parables of Solomon, which the men of Ezechias, King of Juda, copied out." [10]

7 Josue 24, 26.
8 I Kings 10, 25.
9 II Paral. 29, 30.
10 Proverbs, 25, 1.

The Prophet Daniel mentions "the Books," including the prophesies of Jeremias, which he had consulted regarding the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity. "I, Daniel, understood by books the number of the years about which the word of the Lord came to Jeremias the Prophet, that seventy years should be accomplished of the desolation of Jerusalem." [11]

The same slow process was carried on in the work of reorganization of the Jewish commonwealth after the return of the exiles from the Babylonian Captivity and after the wars of the Maccabees. We read: "These same things were written down in the memoirs and commentaries of Nehemias; and how he made a library and gathered together out of the countries the books of the Prophets and of David and the epistles of the kings and concerning the holy gifts." [12]

These are some of the arguments used to show how books, written between Moses and Christ, were one by one or in small groups, added to make the canon of the Old Testament. All this regards (1) the origin, (2) the growth of the Old Testament canon. Now as to its (3) close.

Close of the Palestinian Canon

Our information on this subject also is so very scanty and so vague that naturally there are many opinions about it, few of which can be established with absolute certainty.

Some writers think that the canon of the Old Testament was closed by Esdras, in such a way that, ever

11 Dan. 9, 2. 12 II Maccabees, 2, 13.

afterwards, no book could either get into or get out of the canon. This view has been held in the past by some Catholics and by many Protestants.

As arguments for this opinion they quote:

1) Josephus Flavius, 2) the IV Book of Esdras, 3) some of the early Fathers, 4) the Talmud, 5) the pretended cessation of the prophetic office between the exile and the Christian era. Let us consider these arguments in the order mentioned.

1) The testimony of *Josephus* to the close of the canon is found, if found at all, in the following well-known passage: "We Jews have not myriads of discordant and conflicting books, but only two and twenty books, which contain the history of all past time and which are justly regarded as divine. And of these, five are the books of Moses, which contain the laws and the account of the events which took place after the creation of man down to the death of the legislator of the Hebrews. . . . From the death of Moses to the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B. C. 465–425), King of Persia after Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses relate in thirteen books the things that took place in their time. . . . Then from the time of Artaxerxes to our own time, our history has been written down very particularly [accurately and in detail], but these books have not been considered worthy of the same credit as the books of earlier date, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets. But what credence we have given to all those books of our own nation is evident from our conduct; for, though so long a time has passed, no one has ever been so bold as to add anything

to them whatsoever. But all Jews are instinctively led, from the moment of their birth, to believe that these books contain divine oracles and to abide by [obey] them and, if need be, gladly to die for them." [13] These last words are said, not only of the proto-canonical, but also, and very expressly, of the deutero-canonical books just mentioned.

It is well to remember that Josephus never once denies, but takes it for granted, that the *deuteroi* are sacred and infallibly true, though not yet canonized. He merely places them on a lower level of dignity and authority than the *protoi,* but never on a level with mere secular or profane literature. He takes good care to add that the *deuteroi* enjoyed great credit among the Jews. The credit that they enjoyed was intrinsically equal to that of the *protoi,* because they were equally inspired, though not extrinsically equal, because not yet equally attested by canonization. The credit that they enjoyed was a sort of initial canonization, a canonization in its earliest stages. He says the Jews were willing to die for the *deuteroi* as well as for the *protoi,*— for all the preceding books without distinction.

When Josephus says that nothing has been added to or taken from or changed in these books, he refers, not to the addition, or to the withdrawal of entire books from the number on the list, but only to the substantial interpolation or mutilation or alteration of the wording or text of these same books. We have seen that entire books were added to the list from time to time.

[13] *Contra Appion.*, 1, 8.

From his words it is evident that Josephus expected a prophet to do in the future for the *deuteroi,* what other prophets had done in the past for the *protoi,*— to put them where they belonged,— on a level with the *protoi.*

2) *The IV Book of Esdras,* an apocryphal work written probably about A. D. 100, tells us that Esdras, shortly before his death, was filled with the prophetic spirit and, for forty days, dictated to five scribes ninety-four books, including the twenty-four canonical books of the Hebrew Bible [which it was supposed had been burned by Nabuchodonosor at the destruction of Jerusalem, or which had perished during the Babylonian Captivity] and seventy other books [apocryphal?] which should be delivered to those only who were wise among the people." [14]

This account of the literary activity of Esdras is altogether too marvelous to be accepted on the unsupported authority of an apocryphal book written about 500 years after his death and never accepted by the Church as canonical.

But, however this may be, and granting, for the sake of argument, that the statements are worthy of credence, the student will remark that neither in the passage quoted nor elsewhere in the book is there so much as one word which asserts, either explicitly or implicitly, that Esdras *closed* the canon.

3) *The Fathers* who held that Esdras closed the canon, are Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Theodoret, and Chrysostom. A comparison of their

14 Esdras, C. 14.

language with that of their source of information clearly shows that most of them depended for their opinion on this IV Book of Esdras,— which adds nothing to the value of the argument.

4) The *Talmud,* speaking of the books of the Hebrew canon, says: "Who wrote these books? Moses wrote his own book and the section about Balaam and Job. Josue wrote his own book and eight verses of the law. Samuel wrote his own book and Judges and Ruth. David wrote the book of Psalms with the help of ten elders, Adam, Melchizedech, Abraham, Moses, Elman, Jeduthum, Asaph, and the three sons of Core. Jeremias wrote his own book and the book of Kings and Lamentations. Ezechias and his college wrote Isaias, Proverbs, the Canticle of Canticles, and Ecclesiastes. The men of the Great Synagogue wrote Ezechiel, the twelve prophets, Daniel, and Esther. Esdras wrote his own book and the genealogies of the books of Chronicles as far as himself." [15]

We have quoted this famous passage in its entirely, so that the interested student should lose nothing of what it may possibly contain. It tells us what each man wrote, but it says not so much as one word to show that Esdras or any one else *closed* the canon, either then or at any other time.

Some excellent writers think that better sense can be made out of this passage by giving a different meaning to the Hebrew word *katab,* translated by "wrote." To say that Samuel wrote his book, simply means that he re-wrote it, *i. e.,* that he copied it out into the official

[15] Talmud, Baba Bathra, fol. 14 b.

manuscript, that he thus "canonized" it, inserting it into the canon by simply transcribing it into the official roll. Some affirm and some deny that the word has such a meaning. Loisy says that this exceptional meaning of the word is opposed to uniform tradition and to the meaning which the word always has in Scripture, in the Talmud itself, and everywhere else in Jewish literature. Besides, even if the word "wrote" means to "*canonize*," it certainly does not mean "to *close* the canon." If each successive writer, there mentioned, closed the canon, he could not have closed it very tight, for the next man coming after him opened it again and added other books to it. The same, no doubt, was done after Esdras and after the time of Christ.

In fact, there is no evidence to prove that the canon of the Old Testament was *ever formally closed* in such a way that no more books could be added. It was practically and in effect closed by the Synagogue when they actually ceased to put any more books on the list. But when was that? A few centuries after Christ. The Christian Church also has never formally closed the canon. For all we know it is possible, though not probable, that some of the books written before the death of John the Apostle, that is before the gift of inspiration had ceased, might yet be placed on the canon, *e. g.*, the book of Henoch. Yet the canon is closed to all the books on the canon; once on, they can never get off again.

5) As an argument to show that the Old Testament canon was closed between the return from the exile

and the beginning of the Christian era, they tell us that the *prophetic office* had ceased to exist in that long interval; that the inspiration of a book is a divine act; that, as such, it can be known only by divine supernatural revelation; that this revelation can be known only on the testimony of some recognized prophet; and that, in the interval between the exile and the Christian era, there was no such prophet.[16]

But it is *not true* that prophesy had ceased in the interval between the exile and the Christian era or at any other time before the death of St. John, the last Apostle. That there were, in that interval, no prophets so illustrious as Moses, Elias or Isaias, we admit. That the prophetic ministry, in general, was no longer so remarkable as in earlier times, we also grant. But that it had utterly ceased, or that it had ceased so far as not to be able to canonize a book, is false and can in no way be proved by any text of Scripture or by tradition.

Besides, Josephus himself acknowledges that the high priest consulted the Urim and Thummim as late as about one hundred years before Christ.[17]

Also, the Talmudic doctrine of the "Bath Qol" shows that the Jews believed in the permanence, in some shape or form, of the prophetic gift in all the centuries before Christ.[18]

Then, too, just at the time of Christ, there appeared a galaxy of prophets, such as St. John the Baptist,

16 I Maccabees, 4, 46; 14, 41; II Maccabees, 13 & 15; Josephus, *Contra Apion.*, 1, 8.

17 *Antiquities*, 3, 9.

18 Malou, *Lectures on the Bible*, Tom. II, pp. 42–47.

Zachary, Simeon, St. Elizabeth, the B. V. Mary, and "Anna, a prophetess, a daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser."

Further, that Esdras did not close the canon is evident from the following considerations:

The II Book of Esdras contains the genealogies of the high priests who had returned from Babylon to Jerusalem after the exile, and continues them down to about 150 years after the death of Esdras. In the same book we also read that the descendants of David are traced down to the sixth generation after Zerobabel, who was himself a descendant of David. This brings the composition of these books down to the time of Alexander the Great, or to about B. C. 300.

Now, the presence of these genealogies, the reliability and canonicity of which have never been contested by Jew or Gentile, proves conclusively that the canon containing them could not have been closed either by Esdras or by any one else for 150 years after his death.

Still more surprising is the fact, often conveniently forgotten, that the Jews had not definitely closed the Hebrew canon for a century or two after the birth of Christ. For it is well known that they had a national council at Jamnia, in Galilee, A. D. 90, and perhaps a second council in the same place, A. D. 118, and that, on these occasions, they discussed, as still doubtful, the canonicity of such proto-canonical books as Ezechiel, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Esther, Proverbs, and the Canticle of Canticles. This shows that the canonicity of parts of even the Hebrew canon was not yet settled, was not definitely closed even at that late date.

Mutual Relations of the Two Canons

We have shown that one of the most remarkable facts connected with this subject, and the occasion of much confusion of thought, is that there are two different canons of the Old Testament, as there described.

These canons are not different in their entirety. They are largely identical and to a great extent overlap.

1. It is well known that the Palestinian canon contains all and only the *proto-canonical* books of the Old Testament written in the original Hebrew.

2. It is also well known that the Alexandrian canon contains not only all the *proto-canonical,* but also all the seven *deutero-canonical* books and fragments of the Old Testament, but translated into Greek.

One circumstance to be remembered is that the Catholic Church and all the Oriental churches follow the Alexandrian canon, while the Jews and all the Protestant churches follow the Palestinian canon.

Another circumstance to be remembered is that, in the Alexandrian canon, the proto-canonical and the deutero-canonical books are *all mixed up,* without any distinction between them whatever, thereby showing that they were all considered as equally sacred, equally divine, and equally authoritative. It is so in all the codices or manuscript copies of the Greek Bible extant, such as the Codex Vaticanus, the Sinaiticus, and the Alexandrinus. It was so a long time before the beginning of the Christian era, that is a long time before there could have been any difference of opinion or of

tradition about the matter between Jews and Christians.

Now, how shall we account for this difference between these two canons, both used by the Jews long before and long after the time of Christ? On account of the obscurity that results from the scarcity of documentary evidence, there is a great diversity of opinion on the subject. There are chiefly four opinions:

1) Some writers are of the opinion that the deutero-canonical books *never* were on the Palestinian canon, but only on the Greek or Alexandrian, and that, even in the Greek canon, these books were never *formally*, but only *practically* canonized; that is to say, they were placed on the canon, and read, studied, and meditated as sacred books, but without a definite decision from the Jewish Synagogue, or from priest or prophet. They were considered sacred, divine, and authoritative in all matters of faith and morals by all classes of Jews, but no decision had ever been formally rendered to that effect. There was no doctrinal difference of opinion about it, but only a difference of practice. We read of no controversy on the subject among the Jews before the time of Christ. Josephus mentions the deutero-canonical books, but says that no prophet had yet arisen to decide the question. The question, then, was held in abeyance. Our Lord was the Prophet who decided the matter. He placed these books in the canon, at least informally, by His practice and by the example which He left to His Apostles and to His Church.

2) Other writers hold that, from the very beginning, the Palestinian canon contained not only all the proto-

canonical, but also all the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament, just as the Alexandrian canon does now, but that, in the first centuries after Christ, they were dropped from their canon by the Jews of Palestine, under the influence of the dominant Phariseeism of the time.

In proof of their opinion that the *deuteroi* were in the Palestinian canon, the advocates of this theory quote Josephus and other Jewish writers found in the Talmud.

(a) Towards the close of his *Jewish Antiquities,* Josephus informs us that, in the composition of this work, he had used exclusively "sacred writings" as authority for what he said and, yet, he has frequently quoted the 1st Book of Maccabees and has copied out word for word several passages from the deutero-canonical fragments of Esther, showing thereby that he considered the deutero-canonical books to be "Sacred Scripture."

(b) Another instance: Some of the writers in the Talmud tell us that Baruch is a "prophetic book," that the "Book of Wisdom was written by Solomon," and quote the book of Ecclesiasticus with the same introductory formula used exclusively in quoting Sacred Scripture. If we except the Book of Wisdom and II Maccabees, which were written in Greek, all the other deutero-canonical books were written in Hebrew and, no doubt, on the soil of Palestine.

This fact points to Palestine, not only as the place of their origin, but also as the place from which the Alexandrians received not only the books themselves,

but also their belief in their divine character or inspiration. The deutero-canonical books, therefore, must all have been in the Hebrew canon before they were ever placed in the Greek canon.

Besides, we know that Greek-speaking Jews, the world over, were accustomed to look to Jerusalem for direction in all things pertaining to religion, and what more pertains to religion than to discriminate properly between sacred and profane literature?

We know, too, that Alexander the Great had made Alexandria the capital of his empire and induced many Jews to settle there. They occupied two of the five districts of the city, had their own magistrates, obeyed the law of Moses, followed their own customs, built a temple at Leontopolis, and became the most numerous Jewish community in the diaspora and the most important outside of Jerusalem. They soon forgot Hebrew and adopted the language of the country, which, after the time of Alexander, was Greek. About B. C. 280 they began (with the Pentateuch) to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and about B. C. 130 they had probably finished the task. Their Bible, thus translated, contained the seven deutero-canonical books.

The mere fact that the Alexandrians, apparently with the knowledge and consent of the Palestinian Jews, placed the deutero-canonical books in their version of the Bible on a level of equality with the proto-canonical books, and used them indiscriminately in their private study, in their public teaching, and in the services of the Synagogue, shows that they considered

them as sacred and divine. They certainly would never have treated mere human literature with so much honor and respect.

Neither can there be any reasonable doubt that the Palestinian Jews also believed in the sacred character of the deutero-canonical books. If not, why did they not say so? If not, why did they not object vigorously to seeing them placed on a level of dignity and authority with their sacred and canonical books? Yet they never objected. There is not the slightest trace of schism or controversy on the subject between the Palestinian and the Alexandrian Jews.

Their silence is all the more significant when we reflect that the Alexandrian Jews were accustomed to look to the mother country, Palestine, and to the Holy City of Jerusalem for the sacred books according as they appeared and were recognized as sacred. Of this custom the following are notable instances:

About B. C. 130 the grandson of its author translated the book of Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew into Greek for the use of the Alexandrian Jews (Prologue). About the same time, Dositheus of Jerusalem, with his son Ptolemy, brought to them a copy of the Letter of the Purim, which his grandson Lysimachus, at Jerusalem, had translated from Hebrew into Greek for the use of the Jews in the dispersion.[19]

Again we read that the Jews of Palestine, knowing well how dependent on them for such things were the Jews of Alexandria, volunteered to send them copies of the sacred books which Nehemias had gathered together

[19] Esther II, 1.

after the Exile. "These same things were written down in the memoirs and commentaries of Nehemias; and how he made a library, and gathered together out of the countries the books of the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings, and concerning the holy gifts. And Judas also gathered together all such things as were lost by the war we had, and they are in our possession. Therefore, *if you want these things, send some one that may fetch them to you.*" [20]

These few facts, related quite casually, show that there was a very intimate and frequent "*communicatio in divinis*" between Jerusalem and Alexandria; from which we infer that, if the Alexandrians admitted these seven books as sacred and divine, the Palestinians must have previously held them in the same high esteem. All the more so as it is evident that the Alexandrians must have received from the Palestinians not only the books themselves, but also their high appreciation of the same.

We have already seen that every canonical book is necessarily inspired, but not that every inspired book is necessarily canonical. A book, if ever inspired, is inspired in the very first instant of its existence. Inspiration is the cause, of which the book is the effect. In the logical and in the ontological order, cause precedes effect.

But canonization, which is only the external and official recognition of inspiration, may come only centuries after inspiration. Inspiration is intrinsic and canonization is extrinsic, to the book. Thus a book

20 II Maccabees, 2, 13–15.

may be divine in origin and sacred in character and worthy of profound respect and credence, centuries before the competent authority sees fit to canonize it, or to declare officially that the book is what it is,— sacred and divine.

All Jews, both Hebrew and Greek speaking, admitted that the *deuteroi* were as sacred and as much inspired as the *protoi*. At the same time, they contended that the *protoi* had already been officially canonized by competent authority, and admitted that the *deuteroi* had not yet been thus officially canonized.

Intrinsically, both classes of books were equally divine, equally sacred, and equally authoritative in matters of faith and morals, but their intrinsic equality had not yet been extrinsically and officially recognized.

Was it the fault of the books that they were there, ready and worthy to be canonized? or, rather, was it not the fault of some prophet that he was not there, ready and competent to canonize them? So it all reduces itself to this: — The Palestinian Jews had the right (and exercised the right) to *omit* the *deuteroi* from their Hebrew Bible, because these had not yet been properly canonized, and the Alexandrian Jews had the right (and exercised the right) to *admit* the *deuteroi* into their Greek Bible, because they were sacred and divine, and acknowledged to be such. In theory, both classes of Jews agreed perfectly; in practice, they agreed to disagree. Under the circumstances, as we understand them, it was quite impossible that there should have been a schism or controversy on the subject between Jerusalem and Alexandria.

3) Other and very reputable scholars hold that the *deuteroi* were on the Palestinian canon in the same informal way that they were on the Alexandrian canon, until some time after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian. By that time, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Herodians had disappeared, and the Pharisees had become dominant in Church and State. They were more intolerant and implacable than ever, especially in the schools of theology. It would seem that the entire period of the Maccabean domination (B. C. 164–40) had become to them an object of intense hatred, because Judas Maccabeus and his family had not belonged to the sect of the Pharisees.

The first result of their animosity was that, in the very extensive literature of that long period, almost no mention is made of the glorious exploits of Judas and his brothers for the defense of their country.

The second result was that the Pharisees, in harmony with the rabbins of Tiberias and Babylon, slowly, systematically, and almost imperceptibly excluded the *deuteroi,* and especially the two books of Maccabees, from the public services of the synagogues, till they were quite forgotten and thus practically ceased to be canonical. To disguise their motives and to justify their action in excluding the *deuteroi* they very arbitrarily invented certain conditions of canonicity, which, if once admitted either in theory or in practice, would automatically exclude the *deuteroi* from the canon. The conditions are the three following:

(1) A book, to be canonical, should have been written in a period of remote antiquity.

(2) A book, to be canonical, should have been originally composed and subsequently preserved in the holy Hebrew language and on the sacred soil of Palestine.

(3) A book, to be canonical, should be perfectly conformable with the right interpretation (*i. e.,* the Pharisaical interpretation) of the law of Moses.

Now, a skillful manipulation and application of these conditions easily excluded all the deutero-canonical books from the Old Testament, thus:

a) The Books of Baruch and I Maccabees, after the original Hebrew was lost, survived only in the Greek translation.

b) The books of Wisdom and II Maccabees were written originally in Greek.

c) Tobias was written originally in Chaldee and under the influence of the Bath Qol.

d) Judith could not be twisted into a Pharisaical sense.

e) Ecclesiasticus was too recent in origin (B. C. 180?) and too non-Pharisaical in tone.

(4) It is a common opinion that the Alexandrian Jews did not have a canon *formally* distinct from the canon of the Palestinian Jews.

The formal canon of the Palestinians consisted of all the proto-canonical books in the original Hebrew language. Nothing more.

The formal canon of the Alexandrians consisted of all the *protoi,* but translated into Greek. Nothing more.

Therefore, the two canons were one and the same canon, though in two different languages.

However, over and above this one canon, formally recognized as such by both Palestinians and Alexandrians, there were seven other books, all of which, except two, were written originally in Hebrew and translated into Greek, and recognized by both Alexandrians and Palestinians as sacred in character and divine in origin, though not yet formally canonical.

§ 2. The Old Testament Canon in the Christian Church

I. From the Apostles to A. D. 450

1. The Canon of the Apostles.— When Christianity first appeared, the two O. T. canons, Hebrew and Greek, existed side by side even in Palestine. Relatively few used the Hebrew Bible, because Hebrew had been a dead language for centuries and its use was restricted to the learned, as Latin is at the present day. But not so the Greek, which, especially after the conquests of Alexander the Great, had been carried to the confines of the civilized world and was familiar to nearly every one, even in Palestine. The Greek canon was used by Christ and His Apostles to such an extent that, of the 350 quotations borrowed from the Old Testament into the New, 300 are taken, not from the Hebrew, but directly from the Greek Septuagint Bible. Of course, this extensive use of the Septuagint may not be an explicit and formal approval, but it certainly is an informal and practical ratification of the contents of the Greek Bible, including the deutero-canonical books. For if Christ

and His Apostles had not wished, at least implicitly, to approve these books, they should not only have abstained from quoting them, but they should also have excluded them from that Bible which they intended to leave to the Church as a lasting inheritance for all future ages. This was all the more necessary, especially as the *deuteroi* did not form an appendix to the Greek Bible, but were scattered about and indiscriminately mixed up with the *protoi* in such a way as to show that they were placed on a level with them and enjoyed with them the same divine authority.

The New Testament writers, it is true, do not often quote explicitly the *deuteroi.* But it is equally true that they do not always quote explicitly even the *protoi,* and some of the *protoi* they do not quote *at all,* either explicitly or implicitly. Such are Nahum, Abdias, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Esther, Esdras, and Nehemias,— books whose inspiration they never questioned.

The *deuteroi* are not often quoted in the New Testament, because, as the Rev. Hugh Pope, O. P.,[21] says:

(a) " They do not lend themselves to quotation, since they do not contain the greater Messianic passages.

(b) " Some of the proto-canonical books also are not quoted, *e. g.,* Ecclesiastes and Esther, Canticles, Esdras and Nehemias, etc.

(c) " We give a series of passages which show traces of the deutero-canonical, premising, however, that many of these traces can be detected only in the original text:

21 *Catholic Student's " Aids,"* O. T., Vol. I, pp. 53–54.

1. I Peter 1, 6–7.....Wisd. 3, 5–6
2. Matth. 27, 32–42.....Wisd. 2, 13–20
3. Heb. 1, 3.....Wisd. 7, 26
4. Heb. 4, 12–13.....Wisd. 7, 22–25
5. Rom. 1, 20–32.....Wisd. 13, 1–4
6. I Cor. 2, 10.....Judith 8, 14
7. Matth. 13, 43.....Wisd. 3, 7
8. I Cor. 6, 2.....Wisd. 3, 8
9. Ephes. 6, 13.....Wisd. 5, 17–18
10. Rom. 13, 1.....Wisd. 6, 4
11. Rom. 11, 34, & I Cor. 2, 6.....Wisd. 9, 13
12. II Cor. 9, 7.....Ecclus. 32, 9 (LXX)
13. Rom. 9, 21.....Wisd. 15, 7–8
14. Luke 12, 19, 29.....Ecclus. 11, 19–20 (LXX)
15. I John 1, 14.....Ecclus. 24, 8 (LXX)
16. Rom. 5, 12.....Ecclus. 25, 24 (LXX)
17. Matth. 16, 27.....Ecclus. 32, 19 (LXX)
18. John 6, 35.....Ecclus. 24, 21 (LXX) "

2. The First Three Centuries.— The practice of the Apostles is of the utmost importance, and the next thing to this in importance is the uniform practice and the explicit testimony of the earliest ecclesiastical writers, known as the *Apostolic Fathers,* because they had the best opportunity to know precisely what had been the mind and the practice of the Apostles. This is so evident as to need no further explanation.

It is pretty certain that the Hebrew Bible was never used in the public services of the Christian Church, unless sporadically and in very rare cases, *e. g.,* follow-

ing the conversion of some Jewish scribe or rabbi. The Greek Bible was the only Bible text universally read in the Christian Church, both East and West, until the Old Latin and the Old Syriac versions were made, about 150 A. D., and, even then, the Greek continued to be used almost exclusively long after, *e. g.*, until those two versions had had time to come into general use in their respective rites or churches. But, even so, the *deuteroi* are found both in the Latin and in the Syriac versions.

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, the Fathers of the Church, both for doctrinal instruction and for moral exhortation, quote the deutero-canonical books without the slightest intimation that, in matters of faith and morals, there was any difference of authority between them and the proto-canonical books. For the sake of brevity, we condense the evidence within the narrowest limits.

a) *As to the Western Church.* St. Clement of Rome, disciple of the Apostles (100 A. D.), quotes the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus and epitomizes Esther with its deutero-canonical fragments. The *Shepherd of Hermas* uses Ecclesiasticus and II Maccabees and makes at least twenty unmistakable allusions to Wisdom. (5th Similitude, Ch. V.)

St. Irenaeus (d. 202 A. D.), who was born in Asia Minor, lived long in Rome, and died in Lyons, and who thus was acquainted with all parts of the Church, quotes Wisdom and Baruch and the deutero-canonical parts of Daniel and calls them "prophets."

St. Hippolytus (d. 220), Tertullian (d. 220), and

St. Cyprian (d. 258) use Tobias, I and II Maccabees, Wisdom and Baruch, as all scholars now freely admit.

b) *As to the Oriental Church.*—It is equally evident that the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament were considered sacred and as much inspired as the *protoi,* by such illustrious Fathers as Barnabas, Polycarp, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Dionysius of Alexandria, all of whom use the *deuteroi,* just as they use the *protoi* of the Old Testament.

Special attention is called to two illustrious Greek Fathers of the Syrian Church, the two best representatives of the Antiochian School, St. John Chrysostom and Theodoret. Of these two profound students of Sacred Scripture Canon Westcott says: "They use the apocryphal [deutero-canonical] books freely and without distinguishing them from the books of the Hebrew canon. Thus Chrysostom, to take only one example, quotes passages from Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom, as 'Divine Scripture'." [22]

To this some object the practice of St. Melito of Sardis, who admits only the Hebrew canon. We reply: St. Melito expressly says that he uses such books only as are admitted in the controversy which he had with the Jews. It was useless to quote against them books which they would not admit.[23] St. Melito nevertheless expressly quotes Tobias, Esther, Wisdom and Baruch, as inspired Scripture.

These facts justify the strong language of the

22 Westcott, *The Bible in the Church,* p. 175.
23 Franzelin, *De S. S. et de Traditione,* pp. 445–447.

rationalistic professor of Strassburg, Dr. Reuss, who writes as follows: "The Christian theologians of this period knew the Old Testament only in its Greek or Septuagint form and, consequently, they made no distinction between what we [Protestants] call canonical books and apocryphal books [*i. e.*, between proto-canonical and deutero-canonical]. They quote both with the same confidence, and with the same formulae of honor, and attribute to them an equal inspiration." [24]

This is an explicit admission that the Church of the first three centuries used only the Greek Bible and thus put on the very same level of authority and dignity all the books it contained, both proto- and deutero-canonical.

3. The Fourth and a Part of the Fifth Century.— The perfect unanimity of the Fathers of the first three centuries was seriously interrupted during the fourth and a part of the fifth century. Frequent controversies with the Jews led some of the most illustrious of the Fathers to consider the deutero-canonical books as inspired, and ecclesiastical, and useful for the edification of the faithful; yes, but *not canonical,* at least not yet formally and explicitly canonical.

a) *The Greek Fathers.*— Among these Fathers are included SS. Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Basil, and a few others, and the 60th canon of Laodicea. To all this the answer is obvious; these Fathers advocate in *theory* what they contradict in *practice.* For, in practice, they freely and uniformly quote the deutero-

[24] *History of the Canon of Sacred Scripture,* English translation, p. 93.

canonical books both for instruction in doctrine and for edification in conduct and, in quoting them, they use the same introductory formulas that are used exclusively in quoting canonical Scripture.

For instance, Athanasius introduces passages from Judith, Tobias, Baruch, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus, either as "Sacred Scripture," or with the phrase, "It is written," or "What is said by the Holy Ghost." The other Fathers, above mentioned, do likewise. Not one Greek Father ever denies the inspiration of the *deuteroi.* We may, therefore, say with Augustine, *"Verba sonant, facta tonant."*

Apropos of this strange contradiction between theory and practice, we may quote Dr. Gigot, who says: "It is plain, therefore, that however great may have been the difference admitted by these Eastern writers between the books of the Hebrew Bible and those of the Greek Bible, it did not much influence their practice. Their Bible was the Bible in use in the churches of their time and country. It was the Greek Bible, which had been transmitted to them by their predecessors, and which still contained both classes of books without the least distinction as to their respective authority. They were perfectly familiar with all its parts and, when they wished to edify the people or set forth proofs of revealed doctrine, they instinctively set aside their theoretical views regarding the canon and used indiscriminately all the books which were found in what they knew to be the Bible of the Church." [25]

b) *The Latin Fathers.*— These same views spread

[25] *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture,* p. 53–54.

also to the West and influenced at least three Latin Fathers, Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368 A. D.), Rufinus of Aquileia (d. 410), and especially St. Jerome (d. 420). These three writers all place the deutero-canonical on a level lower in dignity than the proto-canonical books. But, at the same time, if you except Jerome, who was more extreme in his views and more intemperate in speech than the others, "they all deny in practice what they affirm in words." These three writers do not deny the divine origin, but only the *canonicity* of the *deuteroi.*

At times, Jerome seems to deny not only the canonicity, but also the inspiration of the deutero-canonical books. But in practice, he often cites them, just as do the Fathers quoted above,— Athanasius, Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Rufinus. For instance, he speaks of Judith and the deutero-canonical parts of Esther as "holy books." He places Ecclesiasticus between Matthew and Luke; he introduces quotations from Ecclesiasticus by saying: "It is written," a formula used exclusively in citing canonical Scripture, and expressly calls it "divine Scripture."

4. *Catalogues of the Sacred Books.*—Our contention is supported also by the lists or catalogues of sacred books which were promulgated by several early councils and approved by the Apostolic See. The significant part of it is that these canons are *all identical* with that of the Council of Trent.

The first canon that we shall mention is that of the Council of Laodicea, promulgated about A. D. 363. In its 59th decree it forbade any one to read non-

canonical writings in the public services of the Church. Immediately afterwards, in its 60th decree, it gives a list of the Old Testament books which, in *all* respects, is identical with that of the Council of Trent.[26]

Twenty years later, in 383, under Pope Damasus I, a council was held at Rome which promulgated a canon containing all the proto- and all the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament without exception and without distinction. This canon is introduced by the words: "It is now necessary to tell what the universal Catholic Church receives as Scripture and what she avoids." Then follows the Old Testament canon which, in every respect, is identical with that of the Council of Trent and which, from that day to this, has properly been considered the norm or standard in the Catholic Church.[27]

Ten years later, in 393, a council was held at Hippo in Africa, and in 397 another council was held at Carthage, and again, in 419 still another council was held at Carthage, at which St. Augustine was present, and all three councils published canons of the Old and the New Testament,— canons in every respect identical with that of the Council of Trent. They afterwards forwarded these catalogues to the Bishop of Rome and requested him to confirm them with his supreme Apostolic authority; for, they say, "these are the books which the Fathers have handed down to us for public reading in the services of the Church."

Again, in 405, Pope Innocent I sent to St. Exsuper-

26 Mansi, *Conc.*, 1, 2, Col. 574.
27 Theil, *La Décrétale "De recipiendis et non recipiendis Libris."*

ius, Bishop of Toulouse, a copy of the canon of the Roman Church. It was the same, not in language, but in substance, as that of Pope Damasus and of the councils of Hippo, Carthage, and Trent.

Again, in A. D. 495, Pope Gelasius the First, and in A. D. 520, Pope Hormisdas published the very same canon.

Then, after a long interval, Pope Eugene IV, at the Council of Florence, held in 1441, published anew the same canon. And, finally, the canon of Laodicea and Hippo and Carthage, and of Damasus, Innocent, and Gelasius, and of Hormisdas and Eugene, was published in the most formal and definitive manner, by the Council of Trent, in 1546, and again by the Council of the Vatican in 1870.

The criterion of canonicity in all these lists or canons is always the same,— the authority of the Catholic Church or, what amounts to the same thing, the public reading or the traditional use of the Books in the Liturgy of the Church from time immemorial. (Council of Trent.)

2. FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

We must now pass very rapidly over the long interval between the fifth century and our own time. We give only the outlines of the history; but that is all that is now needed.

a) *In the East.*— The practice of the Oriental Churches was the same. They always followed the Greek LXX Version, which contained all the deutero-

canonical books mixed up indiscriminately with the *protoi* and on the same level with them in dignity and authority, and they always quote them as "Sacred Scripture."

b) *In the West.*— The Alexandrian canon continued in full force in the West until about the beginning of the Xth century, when the opinions of St. Jerome began to tell more effectually than ever against the deutero-canonical books.

Hugh of St. Victor, John of Salisbury, Cardinal of St. Caro, Nicholas de Lyra, Cardinal Ximenes, Erasmus, Cardinal Cajetan, and some others denied more or less boldly the *canonicity,* but *not* the *inspiration,* of the *deuteroi.*

Others more numerous and still more illustrious defended both the inspiration and the canonicity of the deutero-canonical books and placed them on a level of equality in every sense with the *protoi.* Such are Gratian, St. Stephen Harding, Stephen Langton, St. Bonaventure, Albertus Magnus, and many others.

Jerome's opposition to the deutero-canonical books was very widely spread by means of his "*Prologus Galeatus,*" which had become the usual introduction to every manuscript copy of the Latin Vulgate, and his prefaces to the several books were, of course, read wherever the Vulgate was used. Then, too, his reputation for being acquainted with the traditions of the East, where he had spent most of his life among the Jews, helped to give currency to his particular views. Besides, many writers on both sides in the controversy saw no difficulty in their contention. Jerome denied

the canonicity of the deutero-canonical books but did not openly deny their inspiration.

On the other hand, the Church asserted the inspiration of the books in question and affirmed that they were divine and true and useful to be read in the public services, but she had not yet defined formally and definitely their canonicity. This was done for the first time in the Council of Trent, A. D. 1546. Hence, Jerome's position was tenable. At the same time, all the contestants in this controversy remembered well that it belongs, not to any private individual to decide which books are canonical and which are not canonical, but only to the holy Catholic Church.

Pope Eugene IV, with the approval of the Council of Florence, declared the deutero-canonical books inspired in the same full sense and by the same Holy Ghost as the proto-canonical, but says nothing about their canonicity. Perhaps, with this distinction in mind, such writers as Alphonsus Tostatus (1455), St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence (1459), and Dionysius the Carthusian (1471) continued to place the *deuteroi* on an inferior plane, as ecclesiastical, but not as canonical. For the first time the Council of Trent dogmatically declared them all, *not only sacred* (inspired), but *also canonical*. The catalogue of Trent is identical in every respect with the lists of Florence, and of Innocent, and of Gelasius, and of Damasus, and of Hippo and Carthage.

In the discussion on the canon at the Council of Trent it was proposed and afterwards carried that all the books, deutero- as well as proto-canonical, in the

Alexandrian canon should be adopted "as sacred and canonical" (*"pro sacris et canonicis"*). At this proposal, one of the bishops said: "The words *'pro sacris et canonicis'* have not my approval, because some of the books are not found in the canon of the Jews. I wish it would be said that they are in the canon of the Church." To this the Cardinal Legate presiding at the Session replied: "Your remark is quite correct; for we follow the canon of the Church and not the canon of the Jews. In calling these books canonical, we have in view the canon of the Church; that is why the words, 'as they are found in the Latin Vulgate Edition' have been inserted in the decree." [28]

A very superficial examination of the decree *"Sacrosancta"* will suffice to show that it was the intention of the Council of Trent:

(1) To define formally and to settle forever the canonicity of both the proto- and the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament, so that no Catholic can ever question them in future.

(2) To extend the decision of the Council of Florence, not only to the inspiration, but principally and formally to the *canonicity* of all, especially the deutero-canonical, books.

(3) To show that inspiration is the basis, the *conditio sine qua non* of canonicity.

(4) To exclude all difference between the proto- and the deutero-canonical books from the point of view of authority and canonicity.

(5) To point out by name and in concrete form

28 Theiner, *"Acta Authentica."*

the individual books and parts of books which are the channel of divinely revealed doctrines, so that they can be identified to their fullest extent.

The O. T. Canon at the Council of Trent

It is well to remark and to remember that the Council of Florence declared all the books on our canon to be divinely inspired and to have "God for their author," but says nothing about their canonicity. The Council of Trent goes farther and, for the first time, by its decree "*Sacrosancta,*" declares the deutero- as well as the proto-canonical books to be not only sacred or inspired, but also "canonical." That is, by a solemn, formal and dogmatic decree, the Council declares or defines that all the books on the canon of the Church are not only "sacred" (inspired) but also "canonical."

The catalogue of books, thus solemnly "canonized" by Trent, is in every way identical with the lists of sacred books promulgated by the councils of Florence, Carthage, Hippo, and by Innocent, Gelasius, Damasus, and Hormisdas, back to Laodicea.

This decree is fully justified by the whole history of the past, for neither the Jewish Synagogue nor the Christian Church ever placed the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament on a level with profane writings, or with merely human literature. At the very least, they were a class by themselves, hanging, as it were, midway between heaven and earth, and awaiting the arrival of the prophet who should place them where they belonged,— on a level of dignity and

authority with the proto-canonical books. That prophet came in the person of the divine Rabbi of Nazareth, who, at least implicitly and informally, canonized these books by his practice and by the example which He gave to His Apostles, which has been followed in all succeeding ages by His Church, in ascetical writings, in theological discussions, and in her liturgical books.

§ 3. The Old Testament Canon Among the Sects

1. *Among the Protestant Denominations.*— Luther, Carlstadt, Zwingli, Calvin, and their respective sects agree so nearly in this matter that it is not necessary to describe in detail the special attitude of each towards the deutero-canonical books. Suffice it to say, in a very summary manner, that they all, some more and some less emphatically, rejected all the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament. Most Protestant denominations, in their general assemblies, allowed these books to remain for several centuries in their official editions of the Bible, but in an appendix and apart from the proto-canonical books, to be read for edification of conduct, but not for the purpose of proving doctrines of faith.

Finally, in 1826, the Anglican Bible Societies decided not to retain the deutero-canonical books any longer in their editions of the Bible and omitted them even as a supplement. For years afterwards, the more conservative Bible Societies on the continent of Europe vigorously opposed this decision of the English So-

cieties, but slowly and with great regret finally yielded to the example thus given, so that now one seldom or never sees a Protestant Bible with the so-called apocrypha appended to the Old Testament. The revised English Version omits them without even a mention, though they were afterwards revised and published in a separate volume.

2. *Among the Oriental Sects.*— When the Chaldean Nestorians, and the Syrian Jacobites, and the Abyssinian Monophysites, and the Coptic Monothelites, and the schismatical Greek and Russian churches, and various other Oriental sects, abandoned the Catholic Church in the fifth and following centuries, they took with them all the proto- and all the deutero-canonical books of the Old Testament and still retain and use them without any distinction. They never had any other canon.

CHAPTER II

THE CANON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The history of the New Testament Canon is much more simple and easier than that of the Old Testament. It is also more important and more useful to us Christians for practical work.

It is a matter of great importance to know *how* the Church received the books of the New Testament, and *when* she collected them into an authentic canon or catalogue.

However, it is unfortunate that the history of the earliest beginnings of the New Testament canon is so very *obscure*. For one or two centuries, all the evidence that we get of the existence of any kind of a New Testament canon consists of references, more or less vague, to *partial, informal* collections of books, but nothing very definite. This is natural and to be expected under the circumstances; for, as might be supposed, the Apostolic Fathers, and most subsequent writers, for a century or more, were not accustomed to quote the New Testament books, either *explicitly* or *literally,* nor were they accustomed to mention either the *name* of the author or the *title* of the book.

Early ecclesiastical authorities were compelled to proceed *slowly* in the formation of the New Testament

canon. This is not at all surprising, when we reflect a moment on the many and very great differences between those early days and our own times. There was then no printing press, no wireless telegraphy, no submarine cable, no parcel post, no regular postal service to deliver dispatches or other missives. Letters and parcels were sent either by special messenger (a costly proceeding) or by some casual traveller who happened to be going that way; and were often lost in transit, or failed to reach their destination.

Then, too, in those early times, apocryphal literature, written mostly by heretics and for the purpose of propagating false doctrines, yet claiming to be divinely inspired, was disseminated broadcast and compelled the ecclesiastical authorities to be doubly cautious, and to ascertain with absolute certainty the Apostolic *origin* or the Apostolic *approbation* of all writings laying claim to a divine origin and to a sacred character.

For important churches centrally located on the great Roman highways, this might not be so difficult; but the minor churches, situated at inconvenient distances from the international thoroughfares and from the lesser beaten paths, might remain long in ignorance of the very existence of such books.

And even when the mere existence of a book was known, it would be necessary to be certain of its Apostolic origin, or of its approval by some Apostle. It would be further necessary to be certain of the conformity of the text or of the exact wording of the particular copy, then in their possession, with the original autographic copy of the Apostle or other inspired

writer. On account of the peculiar circumstances of time and place and person, it is easy to imagine how this process might sometimes last as long as the canonization of a saint in modern times. The danger of deception would make the Church doubly cautious and slow to act.

On account of the peculiar circumstances of those primitive days even profane literature spread slowly. But it took a much longer time for the sacred character and the canonicity of the New Testament books to become known and recognized beyond possibility of doubt.

The existence and the sacred character of each book became known and were authenticated, first, in the particular church to which it was originally addressed, and later in neighboring regions, and much later in distant and inaccessible places, and the inspiration of some books did not become thus known in some places for decades, and even for generations, after they were first published. In fact, a few centuries passed before an absolutely complete and precise canon was formally and universally adopted.

This fact, which is so simple and so natural to anyone who has any knowledge of the past, and who has enough power of imagination to project himself back into those distant ages, and to reproduce the circumstances of the times, clearly explains how it is that also in the New Testament there are not only *proto*-canonical, but also *deutero*-canonical books.

The deutero-canonical books of the New Testament which were generally, though not universally, admitted

in the first two or three centuries of the Church, are (1) the Epistle to the Hebrews, (2) the Epistle of St. James, (3) the II Epistle of St. Peter, (4) the II Epistle of St. John, (5) the III Epistle of St. John, (6) the Epistle of St. Jude, and (7) the Apocalypse.

In general we may say that there never was in the Church any serious discussion about any of the New Testament antilegomena, except the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse, and II Peter. And even about these three books there was no general doubt, but only a temporary hesitancy, a transient indecision in some one place or another, at some one time or another, but never everywhere nor always.

So, the distinction between proto-canonical and deutero-canonical books is hardly applicable to the New Testament, except by analogy to the Old. Yet, it is only of those so-called seven deutero-canonical books that we are to speak in this history, and not of the twenty proto-canonical books, which, from the very beginning, were received as canonical everywhere, always, and by all, without hesitation or discussion.

The books of the New Testament, twenty-seven in number, were nearly all written between A. D. 50 and A. D. 75, except some of the writings of St. John, especially his Gospel, which was composed much later.

But it is not so much our duty to enquire here into the human authorship and human authority of these books, and to decide when, where, how, why, for whom, by whom they were first written, as it is to determine when, how, by whom they were gathered or began to be gathered together into a list or official

catalogue of books possessing final, decisive authority in matters of faith and morals.

These books are nearly all *occasional* in character and were called forth by the needs of some individual person, as Timothy, or Titus, or of some Christian community, such as the Romans or the Corinthians, or of the entire Church. Still, even the occasional writtings, sooner or later, would naturally be gathered into an official catalogue after the analogy of the Old Testament. But this would be a slow process and would take generations to complete.

§ 1. How the N. T. Writings were Collected

It is the general opinion that each of the great Apostolic churches, such as Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Corinth, collected for its own use such writings as were proved to have been written under inspiration and were entitled to a place in the catalogue of sacred books. In this way catalogues of the New Testament books, more or less incomplete, implicit, and informal, were put together at different periods and in distant places, until such times as the Church pronounced upon the subject in some of her greater councils.

That this task of collecting the sacred books was well done is evident from the scrupulous care taken by the earliest churches to discriminate —

(1) Inspired books from spurious or apocryphal and unreliable books, and

(2) The certainly inspired from the non-certainly inspired books, the *protoi* from the *deuteroi.* The process lasted a few hundred years before the Church was finally convinced of the inspiration of all these books.

The *remote criterion* or standard of canonicity in the early Church was the *testimony of God* to the inspiration of the books.

The *proximate criterion,* or practical standard of canonicity, was that a book of the New Testament, to be canonical, should have been either *written or approved by an Apostle.*

Two things are important:

1. To understand the three very different mental attitudes which a man may assume towards, *e. g.,* a book which claims to be canonical, and

2. To know *which* of these three attitudes the early Fathers of the Church assumed towards our New Testament deutero-canonical books.

As to the *first* part:

a) A man may positively *accept* the claim to inspiration as true, and this is *belief;* or

b) He may positively *reject* the claim as false, and this is *disbelief;* or

c) He may *neither* accept *nor* reject the claim, but may remain *neutral,* and this is simply *unbelief.*

The first and second cases are both acts; both are judgments of the mind; both are *positive* by their very nature.

The third is the mere *absence* of an act; it is the

absence of a judgment of the mind; it is doubt, hesitation or suspense between two opposite sides. It is *negative,* neither for nor against the claim.

As to the *second* part:

It is easy to prove that very few or none of the early Church writers positively reject the deutero-canonical books of the New Testament. By far the great majority either positively accept them as canonical, or *pass them over in silence,* having no occasion to mention them, or merely mention them without having formed a judgment, *i. e.,* without having reached a decision as to whether they were canonical or not.

The absence of any prejudice against them explains how it was that, early in the fourth century, these books so suddenly became canonical in the opinion of all concerned.

Another important observation will help the student to understand the *real state* of the question, the *real logic* of the situation.

Some of the Fathers whom we have cited give a formal, explicit, and more or less complete, list of the New Testament books, along with the names of the sacred writers, and the titles of the books or the names of the persons or communities to which they were addressed. This is inclusive or positive. It *includes* the books mentioned; it does *not exclude* other books not mentioned.

Other Fathers go further. After giving the names of the authors and the titles of the books which they consider canonical, they assert or imply that *no other*

books, except those mentioned, are canonical. That is both *inclusive* and *exclusive,* or positive and negative at the same time. It *includes* those books; it *excludes* other books, or all other books. But this case seldom or never occurs among the Fathers in speaking of our New Testament deutero-canonical books.

The *Apostolic* and other *Early Fathers* cite now this, now that, and now the other book of the New Testament; and they cite it more or less literally, more or less freely and by memory, and according to the substance only. But they never even attempt to give us anything like a list, still less anything like a regular formal list of the New Testament books. They never give either the *names* of the *authors* or the *titles* of the *books* quoted. Therefore, their statements are *inclusive,* but *not exclusive.* Books not mentioned *are not thereby rejected;* books not accepted are not, therefore, condemned. In such a case, *"Qui tacet nihil dicit."*

It is very easy to know for certain which books a Church Father admits as canonical, when he enumerates them and gives the names of the authors and the titles of the books, and then says, in so many words, or equivalently, "All these books are canonical; all other books are not canonical." This is the case with St. Athanasius. He first declares canonical the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, and then says: "Let no one add to them; let no one take from them." But this seldom happens. It happened very properly in

the case of St. Athanasius, because fortunately he had just declared canonical *all the twenty-seven books* subsequently declared canonical by the Council of Trent.

But it is sometimes very difficult to know how many and which books the Apostolic or other very early Church Fathers admit to the canon. For those early Fathers never give the name of the author or the title of the book quoted. As was natural under their circumstances, they cite the New Testament books tacitly, implicitly, by memory, according to the sense, and not with verbal accuracy. They quote Scripture only *"pro data occasione,"* and they quote *only so much of it* as serves their purpose, to enforce the moral lesson which, at the moment, they are inculcating.

They may have admitted as canonical many other books which they had no occasion to use or no means to possess. But, unless they tell us, how do we know which books they considered canonical?

Some modern scholar, with marvelous patience and painstaking care, reads every sentence in the extant writings of some Early Church Father, and compares it with every sentence in the Greek New Testament, and discovers how many books of the New Testament the Father ever quoted or referred to in such a way as to show that he considers them normative of faith and morals. Naturally, the results of such labor on the part of modern scholars will occasionally differ, for it is not always easy to know whether certain passages are real quotations or only casual resemblances or fortuitous combinations of the same or similar words or thoughts.

We shall now examine the first beginnings and the gradual formation of the New Testament canon in the following order:

1. In the Apostolic Age, from A. D. 50 to A. D. 100;
2. In the age of the Apostolic Fathers, from A. D. 100 to A. D. 150;
3. From A. D. 150 to A. D. 200;
4. From A. D. 200 to A. D. 300;
5. From A. D. 300 to A. D. 400;
6. From A. D. 400 to the Council of Trent, A. D. 1546.

§ 2. History of the N. T. Canon in the Apostolic Age (50–100)

The first, somewhat vague, notion that we have of the existence of a list of New Testament writings in a collective form, is found in II Peter 3, 15–16, where the Epistles of St. Paul are mentioned in such a way as to lead us to infer, with more or less probability, that most or many of his Epistles had been collected together and were placed more or less formally in some sort of a canon.

The phrase, "in all his letters," might show that St. Peter is speaking of a collection of Paul's Epistles, though he does not indicate which or how many letters in particular had been collected.

The phrase, "as the *other* Scriptures," seems to show that St. Peter placed these Epistles on a level with the books of the Old Testament, and that he considered them as inspired and canonical. As to the

value of such arguments, drawn from the Old Testament to prove the authority of the New Testament, see the treatise on inspiration (*supra*).

§ 3. History of the N. T. Canon in the Age of the Apostolic Fathers (100–150)

From A. D. 100 to A. D. 150 the Apostolic Fathers show that there existed a canon of the New Testament books which they believed possessed equal canonical authority with the books of the Old Testament. To prove this proposition we quote five writers of that period: (1) St. Clement of Rome, (2) the Author of the *Didaché*, (3) St. Ignatius of Antioch, (4) the Author of the Letter to Diognetus, (5) St. Polycarp of Smyrna.

(1) St. Clement of Rome, writing to the Corinthians about the year 100 A. D., shows that he was acquainted with the three Synoptic Gospels, with the Acts of the Apostles, with the Epistle to the Romans, with two Epistles to the Corinthians, with the First Epistle to Timothy, with the Epistles to Titus, to James, to the Hebrews, with the two Epistles of Peter, and with the Apocalypse.[1] In these references, St. Clement cites the New Testament books as on a level with the canonical books of the Old Testament. He corroborates his own words by an appeal to "The Epistle of the Blessed Apostle Paul," written "under the guidance of the Holy Ghost."[2] It is clear that Clement cites Paul's Epistles as possessing a divine

1 See Funk, *Patres Apostolici*, 1901, I, 1, p. 645.
2 First Corinth., 58, 3.

character and canonical authority in faith and morals.

(2) The *Didaché,* or "Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles," dates from between the years A. D. 100 and 110, and shows an acquaintance with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and probably with several of the Epistles of Paul, with the First of Peter, and with the Acts of the Apostles.[3]

(3) The Apostolic Father, St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. 107 or 117), writes thus to the Smyrniotes: "I refer you to the prophets, and especially to the Gospels." Of the heretics he says: "Neither the prophets nor even the Gospels have been able to convert them." Again he says: "I appeal to the Gospels and to the Epistles. Let us love the prophets also."[4] This appeal is neither to the persons nor to the doctrines of the prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, but to their *writings.* It will be noticed that he puts the Gospels and the Epistles on a level with, and almost above, the law and the prophets.

Ignatius quotes the Gospel of Matthew ten times; he also quotes Luke, John, the Acts, Romans, I Corinthians, and Ephesians.[5]

(4) The Letter to Diognetus was probably written in the first half of the second century, or about A. D. 125. The author is unknown. In this letter we read: "The fear of the law is recognized, and the grace of the prophets is acknowledged, and the faith of the Gospels is established, and the traditions of the Apostles are guaranteed." He mentions the two divisions

3 Jacquier, *La Doctrine des Douze Apotres,* pp. 41–50–51–54.
4 *Ad Smyr.,* VII, 2; *Ad Philad.,* V, 1, 2.
5 Funk, *Patres Apostolici,* I, p. 227, p. 572.

of the New Testament, in the plural number, "'the' Gospels and 'the' Apostles," and compares them with the law and the prophets, to show that he ascribes to them the same divine authority as belongs to the books of the Old Testament.[6]

(5) St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (d. 155), quotes several books of the New Testament in such a way as to show that he recognized them as having divine and canonical authority. He quotes Matthew, Mark, the Acts of the Apostles, Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, I Peter, I John.

In view of these facts many critics are convinced that Polycarp must have had a collection of New Testament writings, especially of Paul's Epistles. To the Philippians he writes: "We send you the letter of Ignatius, which we received from him, and all those letters which we possess; if you wish them, send some one for them; you can derive much profit from them." [7]

Heretics of the Apostolic Age

To this testimony of the Apostolic Fathers we will add that of the *heretics* of the same period. They are chiefly Basilides, Valentine, and Marcion.

(1) Basilides taught at Alexandria, about A. D. 120. Eusebius says that he wrote a commentary on the Gospels in twenty-four books. He also used some of the *Epistles* of Paul and the I of Peter.

(2) Valentine taught at Rome, about A. D. 140.

6 Letter to Diognetus, 11, 6.
7 *Ad Philip.*, 13, 2.

He and His disciples made special use of St. John's Gospel, also of the three Synoptic *Gospels*. What is still extant of his writings shows familiarity with the *Epistles* of St. Paul, especially those to the Ephesians and Colossians.

(3) Marcion came from Pontus to Rome, about A. D. 140 or 150, bringing with him an incomplete canon of the New Testament. It contained all the *Epistles* of Paul, except those to Timothy, Titus, and the Hebrews. It also contained the *Gospel* of St. Luke, but abridged and mutilated to suit his theological system. Marcion's canon was the ordinary canon of the Church before his day, though modified to suit his purpose.

The *canons of the Apostolic Fathers* varied considerably according to the circumstances of time, place and persons. But, when we consider that some of these writers were contemporary, or almost contemporary, with the Apostles themselves, and that, looking for the *parousia,* or second coming of Christ, in the near future, they had little relish for either reading or writing books, and that most of what they wrote has perished, it is remarkable that they were able to refer to so many books of the New Testament.

The following facts are well established:

1. The canon containing the four Gospels was definitely adopted within about a decade after the composition of John's Gospel.

2. The canon containing St. Paul's thirteen Epistles (except the Epistle to the Hebrews) was formed about the same time, or a decade later.

3. The Apocalypse and the three Epistles of James, I Peter and I John, were adopted as canonical shortly after.

4. It is probable that the Acts of the Apostles, because written by St. Luke, was considered as an appendix to the third Gospel and was canonized with it at the same time.

5. For a similar reason the three Epistles of John were probably canonized at the same time as his Gospel, *i. e.,* within a few years after it was published.

It is now generally admitted by scholars that, by the year 150, the canon of the New Testament was *practically* complete and *accepted by all.*

§ 4. History of the N. T. Canon from 150 to 200

We shall find that by the year 200 the Church was in possession of a canon of the New Testament, in every sense complete, except for the absence of the II Epistle of Peter. To justify this statement we shall quote five writers of that period: (a) St. Justin; (b) Tatian; (c) Irenaeus; (d) St. Theophilus of Antioch, (e) the Muratorian Fragment.

Of these writers Justin represents the tradition of Palestine and Rome; Tatian, his disciple, represents the tradition of Assyria; Irenaeus, the tradition of Asia Minor and Gaul; the Muratorian Fragment, the tradition of Rome; and Theophilus, the tradition of Antioch.

(a) *St. Justin Martyr* was born of Jewish parentage in the city of Nablous, in Palestine. He taught and died in Rome about A. D. 165. He says that " Christians in his time were accustomed to meet on the day

of the sun, or Sunday, and that the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the prophets were read as long as time allowed." "For the Apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are also called Gospels, have said, etc."

Not long afterwards, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, he describes these Gospels more in detail and says that "they were written by Apostles and their companions." Matthew and John were the Apostles, Mark and Luke were their companions or disciples.

In his 1st Apology Justin quotes from all four Gospels. The Epistles must have been familiar to him, but they were not so much read as the Gospels in public religious services. However, in a careful reading of his text we find evidence that he quotes the Epistle of James, the 1st of Peter, and the 1st of John. We find no trace that he used the Epistle of Jude, II Peter, II and III John.

He mentions the Apocalypse explicitly, and quotes the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles to the Romans, I Corinthians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1st of Peter, 1st of John, James, and the Apocalypse.[8]

The only New Testament books not utilized by Justin are the Epistle of Jude, the 2nd of Peter, and the 2nd and 3rd of John.

(b) *Tatian,* the Assyrian, a disciple of St. Justin Martyr, after the death of Justin, his master, returned to Syria and in Edessa composed, either in Greek or in Syriac, a Harmony (Diatessaron) of the four Gospels, arranging them all in one consecutive narrative,

8 1 *Apology,* n. 67; *Dialogue with Trypho,* 103.

with omissions of duplicates and without repetitions. This work was an official Bible text in the Syrian Church for two or three centuries. Latin translations of an Armenian and also of an Arabic version of the Diatessaron were published by Ciasca and others about twenty-five years ago.

(c) *St. Irenaeus,* Bishop of Lyons, was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of John. Irenaeus passed from Asia Minor, where he was born, to Gaul and died as Bishop of Lyons, about A. D. 202. Writing about the year 180 or 190, he says that in his day in all the churches of Gaul the number of the Gospels was unalterably fixed, "these four and no more." Besides the four Gospels, it is generally admitted that Irenaeus recognized as canonical all the books of our New Testament canon, except Philemon, Jude, and the IIIrd of John. He cites them with the formula *"Scriptura"* and places them on a level with the Old Testament.

St. Irenaeus was a fit representative of the traditions of the churches of Asia Minor, where he was born and educated, and of Rome, where he once lived, and of Gaul, where he died.[9]

(d) *St. Theophilus* of Antioch, in the last quarter of the second century, compares, for canonical authority, our four Gospels with the prophets of the Old Law, "because they were under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit." He declares explicitly that John's Gospel is inspired, and cites Matthew and Luke. He

9 *Adv. Haereses,* III, Cap. II, nn. 8 and 9; IV, 13, 16; V, 1 (Jacquier I, 18, 22, II, 23); V, 26; II, 30, 9.

uses the Pauline Epistles, including the one to the Hebrews, also I Peter and the Apocalypse. This canon is incomplete, because we have only his apologetical writings.

The Muratorian Canon

However, we have a formal, explicit canon of the New Testament, dating from about the year 160. It takes its name from the famous Italian antiquarian, Muratori, who discovered it in the Ambrosian Library at Milan, in 1740. This manuscript once belonged to the great Irish monastery at Bobbio, in Northern Italy, from which it was taken to Milan for safekeeping. It is part of a volume of Latin fragments, which date, apparently, from the VIth to the VIIIth century. But the fragment itself, that is, this particular manuscript, was copied from an older Latin manuscript which had already been mutilated at both ends before it was transcribed. Because of this mutilation the document is called "Fragment."

Internal evidence seems to show that it was originally written in Greek, and at Rome.

It is not easy to read the Latin because it was translated into the popular language of those times. In fact, Muratori first published it as a literary curiosity, as a rare specimen of the "*lingua rustica*" of the VIth or VIIIth century. It is also difficult to read, because it has been copied out very badly, either ignorantly or carelessly. Tregelles and Westcott have restored the text in a way that gives satisfaction to most scholars.

This translation contains internal evidence that its Greek original was written about A. D. 160. For the author says that the *Shepherd of Hermas* was written "*nuperrime nostris temporibus*" (recently in our own times), "in the City of Rome by Hermas, while his brother Pius sat on the chair of Peter."

Now, the date of the pontificate of Pius I, though variously stated, is placed by most writers between 142 and 157. Taking for granted the accuracy of this date, and that Hermas wrote his *Shepherd* about A. D. 150, we may suppose that this canon of Muratori was written about A. D. 160, else it could hardly have been said that Hermans had written "very recently in our own times."

It is interesting to know that the document containing the first real formal canon of the New Testament that has come down to us, originated in the Mother Church of Rome.

At the same time, it is important to remember that many critics do not consider this an official canon, but only the work of a private individual, else the Roman Church might be held responsible for whatever defects be found in this catalogue of books.

As to the author of the Greek original, some have identified him with the Roman Priest Gaius, some with Hegesippus, and some with Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, yet the author is unknown.

The Muratorian canon is mutilated in the beginning, one or more leaves being missing. It begins abruptly with the words, "At which he was present and certified." Evidently these words refer to St. Mark's

Gospel, which had just been mentioned on the foregoing missing leaf; for the author immediately adds: "The *third* Gospel is that of St. Luke, after which comes the fourth Gospel, that of St. John."

The author expressly attributes the Acts of the Apostles to St. Luke. He then adds that St. Paul wrote thirteen Epistles and enumerates them by name. There is no explicit mention of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Perhaps it is identical with what he calls the Epistle to the Alexandrians, of which, under that name, we know nothing. He attributes the Apocalypse to St. John. In one place he mentions a first Epistle of John, and then, in another place, he expressly mentions two (other?) Epistles as John's. In all three he ascribes one Epistle to Jude. He does not mention the Epistle of James, nor the two Epistles of Peter, which is very strange and must be due to an oversight, because this I Epistle of Peter was universally received everywhere in the early Church, especially in Rome.

Thus, at the end of the second century, or by the year 200 A. D., the only New Testament book that we do not find cited in any writer is the II Epistle of Peter.

§ 5. History of the N. T. Canon in the Third Century

From 200 A. D. to 300 A. D. the canon remained about the same as in the previous 50 years, except that there was a tendency to neglect the Apocalypse. In support of this statement we shall cite five writers of the period:

(a) Tertullian,
(b) Cyprian,
(c) Canon Claromontanus,
(d) Clement of Alexandria,
(e) Origen.

(a) TERTULLIAN (d. 220 A. D.) tells us what was the canon in the African Church in his day. There were the four Gospels, whose authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, he mentions by name. In the second part of the canon he enumerates the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, the Epistle of Jude, I of Peter, I, II, and III of John, and the Apocalypse.

Then, in the canon of the African Church in the third century, only three books are missing: James, II Peter, and Hebrews.[10]

(b) ST. CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage, about 250 A. D., uses all the books of the New Testament, except the Epistle to Philemon, that to the Hebrews, the Epistles of Jude and James, the II of Peter, and II and III of John.

(c) A Latin manuscript preserved at Clermont and called the "CODEX CLARAMONTANUS," has a canon that was used in Africa in the third century. It contains all the books in our present New Testament canon, except the Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to the Thessalonians. But these must have been omitted by mistake or carelessness on the part of the copyist, since no one ever doubted their inspiration.

10 *De Praescript.*, 32–36; *Adv. Marcion.*, 4, 2.

(d) CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, president of the famous catechetical school of that city, from about 190 to 202 (d. 217), according to what Eusebius tells us, commentated all the books of the New Testament, including the deutero-canonical books. Clement admitted as canonical the four Gospels, the Acts, fourteen Pauline Epistles, and all the Catholic Epistles, except II Peter.*

(e) ORIGEN (185–254) admits the inspiration of all the books of the New Testament. He divides them into two classes: (1) The γνήσια or universally admitted books. In this class he includes the four Gospels by name, at least thirteen Epistles of Paul, the Epistle of James, I of Peter, I of John, and the Apocalypse, which he ascribes to the Apostle John. (2) The ἀμφιβαλλόμενα or those about which there had been some doubt or hesitation. In this class he includes the Epistles of James, Jude, II Peter, II and III John. He himself did not reject them.

By the end of the fourth century, or before A. D. 400, the contested books were admitted practically everywhere in the Church and by all. Occasionally a speculative doubt is expressed, but only as a matter of history.

To prove this statement we shall cite as witnesses the following ten writers of the period:

1. Eusebius,
2. Athanasius,
3. Cyril of Jerusalem,
4. Gregory Nazianzen,
5. Gregory of Nyssa,
6. Chrysostom,

* *Hist. Eccl.*, VI, 13, 14; *Strom.*, III 13, 15, *Paed.*, 2, 1; *Strom.*, 5, 12.

7. Epiphanius,
8. Rufinus,
9. Jerome,
10. Augustine.

1. *Eusebius* (265–340), Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, from about 315–340, was profoundly learned in the history of the New Testament canon, of which he gives us a formal catalogue. He distinguishes three categories of books:

(a) The "*Homologoumena,*" or the books *accepted* everywhere and by every one;

(b) The "*Antilegomena,*" that is, the books that were *contested* and doubtful for awhile, but whose canonicity was finally acknowledged;

(c) The ἀτοπάκαι δυσσεβῆ, that is, books which were considered spurious, absurd, or trivial.

The first category contains the four Gospels, the Acts, fourteen Epistles of Paul, I Peter, I John, and the Apocalypse.

The second category contains the Epistles of James and Jude, II Peter, and II and III John. We quote his own words: "First in order we place the holy quarternion of the Gospels, which the book of the Acts of the Apostles follows; after this are to be placed the Epistles of Paul; after which we are confidently to admit the reputed First Epistle of John, and likewise that of Peter. After these are to be placed, if it seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we will state the opinions at the proper time; and these are acknowledged," *i. e., homologoumena.*

"Of the disputed books (*antilegomena*), yet well known to the most is the so-called Epistle of James,

the Epistle of Jude, and the II Epistle of Peter, and those which are called Second and Third of John, whether they belong to the Evangelist or to some one of the same name." [11] Eusebius is uncertain where to place the Apocalypse; he sometimes places it in the first and sometimes in the third class.

2. *St. Athanasius,* Bishop of Alexandria, 328 A. D., in his 39th Festal Epistle, explicitly admits as canonical the following *formal* catalogue of New Testament books: The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, fourteen Epistles of Paul, and the seven Catholic Epistles, that is to say, James, Jude, I and II of Peter, I, II, and III of John, and the Apocalypse, which, he says, is by John the Apostle. Then he adds: "These are the sources of salvation, in these only is the doctrine of piety taught. Let no one add to them; let no one take away from them." [12]

3. *St. Cyril,* Bishop of Jerusalem, about 351 A. D., tells us which books belong to the canon of the New Testament. "They are the following: The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the fourteen Epistles of Paul and the seven Catholic Epistles of James, Jude, I and II of Peter, I, II, and III of John. These [he says] are the only canonical books." The only book he does not mention is the Apocalypse.[13]

4–5. Like St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *St. Gregory Nazianzen* and *St. Gregory of Nyssa* consider canonical all the books of our New Testament, except the Apocalypse.

11 Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. III, Cap. 25; Lib. VI, Cap. XXV.
12 Festal Epistle, 39.
13 *Catecheses,* IV, Sec. 36.

6. *St. John Chrysostom* (about 345–407 A. D.), was a presbyter at Antioch, and afterwards became bishop of Constantinople. We give his canon of the New Testament in his own words, as follows: "The books of the New Testament are, the fourteen Epistles of Paul, the four Gospels, two belonging to the disciples of Christ, John and Matthew, two of Luke and Mark, one of whom was a disciple of Peter, and the other of Paul . . . the book of the Acts, belonging to Luke, who related the transactions, and of the Catholic Epistles, three." [14] These three Catholic Epistles are the Epistles of James, the I of Peter, and the I of John, which are sometimes quoted in his works.

7. *St. Epiphanius,* Bishop of Salamis, on the Island of Cyprus (about 375 A. D.), admitted, as we see from his works, all our books of the New Testament as canonical, with the possible, but not probable, exception of Jude and III John.

8. *Rufinus* was a presbyter of Aquileia, in Northern Italy (about 345–410). We give his canon of the New Testament in his own words:—"Four Gospels, . . . the Acts of the Apostles, which Luke wrote; fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, I of James, I of Jude, two of Peter, three of John, and the Apocalypse of John. These are the books which our fathers included in the canon, and from which they wished the principles of our faith to be established."[15]

9. *St. Jerome,* who was born at Stridon in Dalmatia and died at Bethlehem in Palestine (340–420), re-

14 *Synopsis of Holy Scripture,* Vol. VI, Migne's edition.
15 *Comment. in Symbol. Apost.,* Sec. 37.

garded as canonical the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, which he ascribes to Luke, thirteen Epistles which he ascribes to St. Paul, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, on account of its difference of style, he ascribes, not to Paul, but either to Barnabas, or Luke, or Clement, afterwards Bishop of the Roman Church, who puts into his own language the thoughts of Paul. He questions merely the human authorship, but grants the divine authority of this book. As a matter of history, he mentions the doubts and hesitations of some writers of the past about the seven Catholic Epistles, but for himself he does not deny their canonicity.[16]

10. *St. Augustine* (about 350–430) was Bishop of Hippo, near Carthage, in Northern Africa. We give in his own words his explicit and formal canon of the New Testament, as follows: "Four Gospels . . . fourteen Epistles of Paul (which he names in order), two of Peter, three of John, I of Jude, and I of James, the Acts of the Apostles in one book, and the Apocalypse of John in one book." [17]

Testimony of the Ancient Versions

We have considered the Fathers long enough; let us now turn to the testimony of the ancient versions, the importance of which, as witnesses, cannot easily be exaggerated. We shall mention, (a) the Old Latin; (b) the Old Syriac; (c) the Egyptian; (d) the Ethiopic; (e) the Armenian, and (f) the Gothic versions.

16 *Introduct. to Comment. on Matthew,* also *Liber de Viris Illust.;* Jacquier, pp. 315–321.

17 *Christian Doctrine,* Book II, Chap. 8.

(a) The early *Latin version* of the New Testament, made about the middle of the second century (A. D. 150), perhaps in Northern Africa, contained the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of Paul, the Epistle of Jude, the I Epistle of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Apocalypse. The Epistle to the Hebrews, James, and II Peter are the only books that were missing. In the ancient manuscripts of the Old Latin Version, preceding that of Jerome, all the books of the New Testament are found, either entire or in fragments. But we are not in a position to say that the earliest Latin version originally contained the Epistle to the Hebrews, the II Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of James.

(b) The early *Syriac version* of the New Testament, often called "Peshito," begun about the middle of the IInd century, originally contained all our canonical books except the Epistle of Jude, the II Epistle of Peter, the II and III of John, and the Apocalypse. These were added some time later.

St. Ephrem, the Syrian, who died about 373 A. D., recognized as inspired all our books of the New Testament without exception. It is probable that he got them from the "Peshito," to which they had been added long before.

(c) The two *Egyptian versions,* the Memphitic and the Theban, were translated very probably about the beginning of the IIIrd century.

(α) The Memphitic contained all the books of the New Testament in the canon of the Council of Trent;

(β) This is probably the case with the Theban ver-

sion also, though no remains of the Epistle to Titus or to Philemon have succeeded in reaching us.

(d) The *Ethiopic* or Abyssinian version, made perhaps in the fourth century, contains all the books of our New Testament without exception.

(e) The *Armenian* Church had a version of the entire Bible some time in the fifth century. It contained all our books of the New Testament.

(f) The *Gothic* version was made by Ulfilas in the fourth century. It is not known how much of the New Testament was then translated into Gothic; but we have fragments of the four Gospels and of thirteen Epistles of St. Paul.

This shows that, at a very early date, several of these churches or rites, considered as entire nations or peoples, already had the canon of the Council of Trent.

Testimony of Popes and Councils

About 363 A. D., the Council of *Laodicea,* in its 59th decree, forbade any one to read non-canonical writings in the public service of the Church. Immediately afterwards, in its 60th decree, it gave a list of the sacred books, which is the same as that of the Council of Trent, except for the absence of the Apocalypse.[18]

Twenty years later, in 383, under Pope *Damasus I,* a council held at Rome published a decree entitled, "What the universal Catholic Church holds and what it forbids," *i. e.,* in regard to Holy Scripture. Then follows the New Testament canon, which, in every

18 Mansi, *Conc.,* I, II, cod., 574.

respect, is identical with that of the Council of Trent, and which, from that day to this, has properly been considered the norm or rule in the Catholic Church.

Ten years later, in 393, a council was held at Hippo, in Africa, and another was held at Carthage in 397, both of which published canons of the Old and the New Testament, canons in every respect identical with the canon of the Council of Trent.

Again in 419, another council of Carthage, at which St. Augustine was present, promulgated the same canon.

Again in 405, Pope *Innocent I* sent to St. Exsuperius, Bishop of Toulouse, a copy of the canon of the Roman Church. It was the same, not in language, of course, but in substance, as that of Pope Damasus, and of the councils of Hippo, Carthage, and Trent.

In 495 Pope *Gelasius I,* and in 520 Pope *Hormisdas* again published the same canon. Then, after a long interval, Pope *Eugene IV,* in 1441, at the Council of Florence, published anew the same canon.

The same canon was published at *Trent* in 1546 and finally by the Council of the *Vatican* in 1870.

§ 6. The New Testament Canon Among Protestants

In deciding on the canonicity of the New Testament books, *Luther* followed the criteria ascribed to him *supra,* in the treatise on inspiration. As there explained, his criteria were purely subjective and arbitrary, and rest on no foundation either in history or theology, or anywhere else outside a fertile brain.

Pretending to follow such criteria, Luther denied the canonicity of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the Epistle of James, of the Epistle of Jude, and of the Apocalypse. Yet he did not exclude them from his Bible, but placed them at the end of the volume, apart by themselves.

Carlstadt, Chemnitz, and many other Lutheran divines were unwilling to follow their leader in several respects. The result was that by the seventeenth century Lutherans had become quite reconciled to these books, and in speaking of them, adopted a language less offensive to Catholics. Many of them divided the New Testament Books into two classes: those of the " First Canon " and those of the " Second Canon "; yet regarded all as canonical and retained all in their New Testament.

In deciding on the canonicity of the New Testament books, *Calvin* followed a different criterion, equally capricious and equally misleading, as explained *supra,* Part I. It is often called " The Testimony of the Spirit." He seems to have denied the canonicity of the I and II Epistles of John. With time Calvinists in general abandoned, at least in practice, Calvin's pietistic criterion of inspiration and admitted as canonical all the books of the New Testament.

The *Church of England,* even from the beginning of its separation from Rome, decided the question of canonicity in accordance with the tradition of the Catholic Church of the first six centuries. In one of their formularies they say: " We receive all the books of the New Testament that are commonly received."

They make no distinction between the two classes of the New Testament books.

It is quite otherwise, of course, with *Rationalists* and rationalizing Protestants, whose members grow apace. But of them we speak more fully elsewhere.

From the beginning of the fifth century all the churches, that is all parts of the Church, were in possession of the New Testament canon precisely as the Council of Trent has given it to us. From Pope Innocent I (405) and the Council of Carthage (393) to Pope Eugene IV and the Council of Florence (1441) the extent of the New Testament canon was no longer a topic of discussion.

The *decree* for the union of the Jacobites, who were required to adopt the canon of the Catholic Church, gave occasion to some brief discussion of the subject, but it soon subsided. The opposition of the early Reformers to the deutero-canonical books of both Testaments gave an opportunity to the *Council of Trent* (1546) to declare all the sacred books to be, not only inspired, but also canonical.

Modern rationalistic views on the canon and certain false theories about the nature of inspiration, gave occasion to the *Vatican Council* to renew the decree of Trent with a few additions.

But for Catholics, the extent of the New Testament Canon has been practically a *"res judicata"* for the last 1500 years.

In conclusion, we have seen that from A. D. 150, that is, from only 50 years after John had written his Gospel, the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles,

thirteen Epistles of Paul, the I Epistle of Peter, and the I of John were *received everywhere* in the Christian world as divine and canonical writings. Such a general reception at a time so close to the days of the Apostles is remarkable, especially considering the difficulties of travel and of communication in general.

It is very natural that some of the Catholic Epistles should have been but little known and little read, when one reflects of how relatively little importance they are. The Epistle of Jude consists of but one short chapter, containing only 25 verses; the III Epistle of John contains only 14 verses; and his II Epistle has only 13 verses; and all that they contain may easily be found elsewhere and in just as good a form. Even in our own day millions of Christians have never seen them quoted or perhaps even mentioned.

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CANON

[For collateral reading about the History of the Canon, the beginner, after reading carefully the directions given in Vol. I of this work how to proceed, should consult (1) the General Introduction, (2) the Biblical Dictionaries and Encyclopedia, (3) the Monographs, as given there, and (4) the following list of books, most of which are easily accessible.]

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